MODERN PAINTING

WILLARD HUNTINGTON WRIGHT

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Modern Painting

Its Tendency and Meaning

By

Willard Huntington Wright

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FOREWORD

THAT beneath all great art there has been a definite animating purpose, a single and profound desire to reach a specific goal, has been but vaguely sensed by the general public and by the great majority of critics. And there are, I believe, but very few persons not directly and seriously concerned with the production of pictures, who realise that this animating purpose has for its aim the solution of the profoundest problems of the creative will, that it is rooted deeply in the æsthetic consciousness, and that its evolution marks one of the most complex phases of human psychology. The habit of approaching a work of art from the naïf standpoint of one's personal temperament or taste and of judging it haphazardly by its individual appeal, irrespective of its inherent æsthetic merit, is so strongly implanted in the average spectator, that any attempt to define the principles of form and organisation underlying the eternal values of art is looked upon as an act of gratuitous pedantry. But such principles exist, and if we are to judge works of art accurately and consistently these principles must be mastered. Otherwise we are without a standard, and all our opinions are but the outgrowth of the chaos of our moods.

Any attempt to democratise art results only in the lowering of the artistic standard. Art cannot be taught; and a true appreciation of

it cannot grow up without a complete understanding of the æsthetic laws governing it. Those qualities in painting by which it is ordinarily judged are for the most part irrelevancies from the standpoint of pure æsthetics. They have as little to do with a picture's infixed greatness as the punctuation in Faust or the words of the Hymn to Joy in the Ninth Symphony. Small wonder that modern art has become a copious fountain-head of abuse and laughter; for modern art tends toward the elimination of all those accretions so beloved by the general — literature, drama, sentiment, symbolism, anecdote, prettiness and photographic realism.

This book inquires first into the function and psychology of all great art, and endeavours to define those elements which make for genuine worth in painting. Next it attempts to explain both the basic and superficial differences between "ancient" and "modern" art and to point out, as minutely as space will permit, the superiority of the new methods over the old. By this exposition an effort is made to indicate the *raison d'être* of the modern procedure. After that, modern painters are taken up in the order of their importance to the evolution of painting during the last hundred years. I have tried to answer the following questions: What men and movements mark the milestones in the development of the new idea? What have been the motivating forces of each of these schools? To what extent are their innovations significant: what ones touch organically on the vital problems of æsthetics; and what was their influence

on the men who came later? Out of what did the individual men spring; what forces and circumstances came together to make their existence possible? What were their aims, and what were their actual achievements? What relation did they bear to one another, and in what way did they advance on one another? Where has modern art led, and what inspirational possibilities lie before it?

Before setting out to solve these problems, all of which have their roots in the very organisms of the science of æsthetics, I have posed a definite *rationale* of valuation. My principles are based on the quickening ideals of all great art, and, if properly understood, I believe, they will answer every question which arises in the intelligent spectator when he stands before a piece of visual art, be it a Byzantine mosaic, a complicated organisation by Rubens, a linear arrangement by Picasso or an utterly worthless anecdote in paint by an English academician. Necessarily preoccupied with the application of my critical standard, I have had but little time and space to devote to its elucidation. Yet I have striven in this indirect process of statement to make my fundamental postulate sufficiently clear to enable the reader to recognise its truth and unity. Two years ago when I crowded my hypothesis into 7000 words in the *Forum*, and early last winter when I stated it in even briefer space in the *New Age*, I found that, although it took a new and difficult stand, there were many who grasped its essentials. Therefore I feel myself entitled to hope that in its present form it will be comprehensible even

to those whose minds are not trained in the complexities of æsthetic research.

In stripping art of its intriguing charm and its soothing vagueness it is not my intention to do away with its power to delight. To the contrary, I believe that only by relieving painting of its dead cargo of literature, archæology and illustration can it be made to function freely. Painting should be as pure an art as music, and the struggles of all great painters have been toward that goal. Its medium—colour—is as elemental as sound, and when properly presented (with the same scientific exactness as the harmonies of the tone-gamut) it is fully as capable of engendering æsthetic emotion as is music. Our delight in music, no matter how primitive, is not dependent on an imitation of natural sounds. Music's pleasurable significance is primarily intellectual. So can painting, by its power to create emotion and not mere sensation, provoke deep æsthetic feeling of a far greater intensity than the delight derived from transcription and drama. Modern painting strives toward the heightening of emotional ecstasy; and my *esthétique* is intended to pave the way for an appreciation of art which will make possible the reception of that ecstasy. With this object ever in view I have weighed the painting of the last century, and have judged it solely by its ability or inability to call forth a profound æsthetic emotion. Almost any art can arouse pleasing sentiments. Only great art can give us intellectual rapture.

W. H. W.

Paris, 1915

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Modern Painting

Modern Painting

I

ANCIENT AND MODERN ART

THROUGHOUT the entire history of the fine arts, no period of æsthetic innovation and endeavour has suffered from public malignity, ridicule and ignorance as has painting during the last century. The reasons for this are many and, to the serious student of art history, obvious. The change between the old and the new order came swiftly and precipitously, like a cataclysm in the serenity of a summer night. The classic painters of the first half of the nineteenth century, such as David, Ingres, Gros and Gérard, were busy with their rehabilitation of ancient traditions, when without warning, save for the pale heresies of Constable, a new and rigorous régime was ushered in. It was Turner, Delacroix, Courbet and Daumier who entered the sacred temple, tore down the pillars which had supported it for centuries, and brought the entire structure of established values crashing down about them. They survived the *débâcle*, and when eventually they laid aside their brushes for all time it was with the unassailable knowledge that they had accomplished the greatest and most significant metamorphosis in the history of any art.

But even these hardy anarchists of the new order little dreamed of the extremes to which

their heresies would lead. So precipitous and complex has been the evolution of modern painting that most of the most revolutionary moderns have failed to keep mental step with its developments and divagations. During the past few years new modes and manners in art have sprung up with fungus-like rapidity. "Movements" and "schools" have followed one another with astounding pertinacity, each claiming that finality of expression which is the aim of all seekers for truth. And, with but few exceptions, the men who have instigated these innovations have been animated by a serious purpose — that of mastering the problem of æsthetic organisation and of circumscribing the one means for obtaining ultimate and indestructible results. But the problems of art, like those of life itself, are in the main unsolvable, and art must ever be an infinite search for the intractable. Form in painting, like the eternal readjustments and equilibria of life, is but an approximation to stability. The forces in all art are the forces of life, coordinated and organised. No plastic form can exist without rhythm: not rhythm in the superficial harmonic sense, but the rhythm which underlies the great fluctuating and equalising forces of material existence. Such rhythm is symmetry in movement. On it all form, both in art and life, is founded.

Form in its artistic sense has four interpretations. First, it exhibits itself as shallow imitation of the surface aspects of nature, as in the work of such men as Sargent, Sorolla and Simon. Secondly, it contains qualities of solidity and competent construction such are as found in the

paintings of Velazquez, Hogarth and Degas. Thirdly, it is a consummate portrayal of objects into which arbitrary arrangement has been introduced for the accentuation of volume. Raphael, Poussin and Goya exemplify this expression of it. Last, form reveals itself, not as an objective thing, but as an abstract phenomenon capable of giving the sensation of palpability. All great art falls under this final interpretation. But form, to express itself æsthetically, must be composed; and here we touch the controlling basis of all art: — organisation. Organisation is the use put to form for the production of rhythm. The first step in this process is the construction of line, line being the direction taken by one or more forms. In purely decorative rhythm the lines flow harmoniously from side to side and from top to bottom on a given surface. In the greatest art the lines are bent forward and backward as well as laterally so that, by their orientation in depth, an impression of profundity is added to that of height and breadth. Thus the simple image of decoration is destroyed, and a microcosmos is created in its place. Rhythm then becomes the inevitable adjustment of approaching and receding lines, so that they will reproduce the placements and displacements to be found in the human body when in motion.

To understand, and hence fully to appreciate, a painting, we must be able to recognise its inherent qualities by the process of intellectual reasoning. By this is not implied mechanical or scientific observation. Were this necessary, art would resolve itself into a provable theory and would produce in us only such mental pleas-

ure as we feel before a perfect piece of intricate machinery. But once we comprehend those constitutional qualities which pervade all great works of art, plastic and graphic, the sensuous emotion will follow so rapidly as to give the effect of spontaneity. This process of conscious observation in time becomes automatic and exerts itself on every work of art we inspect. Once adjusted to an assimilation of the rhythmic compositions of El Greco and Rubens, we have become susceptible to the tactile sensation of form in all painting. And this subjective emotion is keener than the superficial sensation aroused by the prettiness of design, the narrative of subject-matter, or the quasi-realities of transcription. More and more as we proximate to a true understanding of the principles of art, shall we react to those deeper and larger qualities in a painting which are not to be found in its documentary and technical side. Also our concern with the transient sentiments engendered by a picture's external aspects will become less and less significant. Technique, dramatic feeling, subject, and even accuracy of drawing, will be relegated to the subsidiary and comparatively unimportant position they hold in relation to a painting's *æsthetic purpose*.

The lack of comprehension — and consequently the ridicule — which has met the efforts of modern painters, is attributable not alone to a misunderstanding of their seemingly extragavant and eccentric mannerisms, but to an ignorance of the basic postulates of all great art both ancient and modern. Proof of this is afforded by the constant statements of preference for the least effectual of older painters over the greatest of

the moderns. These preferences, if they are symptomatic of aught save the mere habit of a mind immersed in tradition, indicate an immaturity of artistic judgment which places prettiness above beauty, and sentimentality and documentary interest above subjectivity of emotion. The fallacies of such judgment can best be indicated by a parallel consideration of painters widely separated as to merit, but in whom these different qualities are found. For instance, the prettiness of Reynolds, Greuze and Murillo is as marked as the prettiness of Titian, Giorgione and Renoir. The latter are by far the greater artists; yet, had we no other critical standard save that of charm, the difference between them and the others would be indistinguishable. Zuloaga, Whistler, Botticelli and Böcklin are as inspirational of sentiment as Tintoretto, Corot, Raphael and Poussin; but by no authentic criterion are they as great painters. Again, were drama and simple narrative æsthetic considerations, Regnault, Brangwyn, and Antonino Molineri would rank with Valerio Castello, Rubens and Ribera.

In one's failure to distinguish between the apparent and the organic purposes of art lies the greatest obstacle to an appreciation of what has come to be called modern painting. The truths of modern art are no different from those of ancient art. A Cézanne landscape is not dissimilar in aim to an El Greco. The one is merely more advanced as to methods than the other. Nor do the canvases of the most ultra-modern schools strive toward an æsthetic manifestation radically unlike that aspired to in Michelangelo's Slaves. Serious modern art, despite its often

formidable and bizarre appearance, is only a striving to rehabilitate the natural and unalterable principles of rhythmic form to be found in the old masters, and to translate them into relative and more comprehensive terms. We have the same animating ideal in the pictures of Giotto and Matisse, Rembrandt and Renoir, Botticelli and Gauguin, Watteau and Picasso, Poussin and Friesz, Raphael and Severini. The later men differ from their antedecents in that they apply new and more vital methods to their work. Modern art is the logical and natural outgrowth of ancient art; it is the art of yesterday heightened and intensified as the result of systematic and painstaking experimentation in the media of expression.

The search for composition — that is, for perfectly poised form in three dimensions — has been the impelling dictate of all great art. Giotto, El Greco, Masaccio, Tintoretto and Rubens, the greatest of all the old painters, strove continually to attain form as an abstract emotional force. With them the organisation of volumes came first. The picture was composed as to line. Out of this grew the subject-matter — a demonstration *a posteriori*. The human figure and the recognisable natural object were only auxiliaries, never the sought-for result. In all this they were inherently modern, as that word should be understood; for the new conception of art strives more and more for the emotion rather than the appearance of reality. The objects, whether arbitrary or photographic, which an artist uses in a picture are only the material through which plastic form finds expression. They are the means, not the

end. If in the works of truly significant art there is a dramatic, narrative or illustrative interest, it will be found to be the incidental and not the important concomitant of the picture.

Therefore it is not remarkable that, with the introduction of new methods, the illustrative side of painting should tend toward minimisation. The elimination of all the superfluities from art is but a part of the striving toward defecation. Since the true test of painting lies in its subjective power, modern artists have sought to divorce their work from all considerations other than those directly allied to its primary function. This process of separation advanced hand in hand with the evolution of new methods. First it took the form of the distortion of natural objects. The accidental shape of trees, hills, houses and even human figures was altered in order to draw them into the exact form demanded by the picture's composition. Gradually, by the constant practice of this falsification, objects became almost unrecognisable. In the end the illustrative obstacle was entirely done away with. This was the logical outcome of the sterilising modern process. To judge a picture competently, one must not consider it as a mere depiction of life or as an anecdote: one must bring to it an intelligence capable of grasping a complicated counterpoint. The attitude of even such men as Celesti, Zanchi, Padovanino and Bononi is never that of an illustrator, in no matter how sublimated a sense, but of a composer whose aim is to create a polymorphic conception with the recognisable materials at hand.

Were art to be judged from the pictorial and realistic viewpoint we might find many meticulous craftsmen of as high an objective efficiency as were the men who stood at the apex of genuine artistic worth — that is, craftsmen who arrived at as close and exact a transcription of nature, who interpreted current moods and mental aspects as accurately, and who set forth superficial emotions as dramatically. Velazquez's Philip IV, Titian's Emperor Charles V, Holbein's The Ambassadors, Guardi's The Grand Canal — Venice, Mantegna's The Dead Christ and Dürer's Four Naked Women reproduce their subjects with as much painstaking exactitude as do El Greco's The Resurrection of Christ, Giotto's Descent from the Cross, Masaccio's Saint Peter Baptising the Pagans, Tintoretto's The Miracle of Saint Mark, Michelangelo's Creation of the Sun and Moon, and Rubens's The Earl and Countess of Arundel. But these latter pictures are important for other than pictorial reasons. Primarily they are organisations, and as such they are of æsthetic value. Only secondarily are they to be appraised as representations of natural objects. In the pictures of the former list there is no synthetic co-ordination of tactile forms. Such paintings represent merely "subject-matter" treated capably and effectively. As sheer painting from the artisan's standpoint they are among the finest examples of technical dexterity in art history. But as contributions to the development of a pure art form they are valueless.

In stating that the moderns have changed the quality and not the nature of art, there is no implication that in many instances the great

men of the past, even with limited means, have not surpassed in artistic achievement the men of today who have at hand more extensive means. Great organisers of plastic form have, because of their tremendous power, done with small means more masterly work than lesser men with large means. For instance, Goya as an artist surpasses Manet, and Rembrandt transcends Daumier. This principle holds true in all the arts. Balzac, ignorant of modern literary methods, is greater than George Moore, a master of modern means. And Beethoven still remains the colossal figure in music, despite the vastly increased modern scope of Richard Strauss's methods. Methods are useless without the creative will. But granting this point (which unconsciously is the stumbling block of nearly all modern art critics), new and fuller means, even in the hands of inferior men, are not the proper subject for ridicule.

It must not be forgotten that the division between old and modern art is not an equal one. Modern art began with Delacroix less than a hundred years ago, while art up to that time had many centuries in which to perfect the possibilities of its resources. The new methods are so young that painters have not had time to acquire that mastery of material without which the highest achievement is impossible. Even in the most praiseworthy modern art we are conscious of that intellectual striving in the handling of new tools which is the appanage of immaturity. Renoir, the greatest exponent of Impressionistic means, found his artistic stride only in his old age, after a long and arduous life of study and exper-

imenting. His canvases since 1905 are the first in which we feel the fluency and power which come only after a slow and sedulous process of osmosis. Compare, for instance, his early and popular Le Moulin de la Galette with his later portraits, such as Madame T. et Son Fils and La Fillette à l'Orange, and his growth is at once apparent.

The evolution of means is answerable to the same laws as the *progressus* in any other line of human endeavour. The greatest artists are always culminations of long lines of experimentations. In this they are eclectic. The organisation of observation is in itself too absorbing a labour to permit of a free exercise of the will to power. The blinding burst of genius at the time of the Renaissance was the breaking forth of the accrued power of generations. Modern art, having no tradition of means, has sapped and dispersed the vitality of its exponents by imposing upon them the necessity for empirical research. It is for this reason that we have no men in modern art who approximate as closely to perfection as did many of the older painters. But had Rubens, with his colossal vision, had access to modern methods his work would have been more powerful in its intensity and more far-reaching in its scope.

However, in the brief period of modern art two decided epochs have been brought to a close through this accumulation and eruption of experimental activities in individuals. Cézanne brought to a focus the divergent rays of his predecessors and incorporated into his canvases both the aspirations and achievements of the art which had

preceded him. This would have been impossible had he been born — even with an equally great talent — fifty years before. And a more recent school of art, by making use of the achievements of both Cézanne and Michelangelo, and by adding to them new discoveries in the dynamics of colour, has opened up a new vista of possibilities in the expressing of form. This step also would have been impossible without Cézanne and the men who came before and after him. Once these new modes, which are indicative of modern art, become understood and pass into the common property of the younger men, we shall have achievement which will be as complete as the masterpieces of old, and which will, in addition, be more poignant.

Although the methods of the older painters were more restricted than those of the moderns, the actual materials at their disposal were fully as extended as ours of today. But knowledge concerning them was incomplete. As a consequence, all artists antecedent to Delacroix found expression only in those qualitites which are susceptible of reproduction in black and white. In many cases the sacrifice of colour enhances the intrinsic merit of such reproductions, for often the characteristics of the different colours oppose the purposes of a picture's planes. Today we know that certain colours are opaque, others transparent; some approach the eye, others recede. But the ancients were ignorant of these things, and their canvases contained many contradictions: there was a continuous warring between linear composition and colour values. They painted solids violet, and transpicuous

planes yellow — thereby unconsciously defeating their own ends, for violet is limpid, and yellow tangible. In one-tone reproductions such inconsistencies are eliminated, and the signification of the picture thereby clarified. It was Rubens who embodied the defined attributes of ancient art in their highest degree of pliability, and who carried the impulse toward creation to a point of complexity unattained by any other of the older men. In him we see the culmination of the evolution of linear development of light and dark. From his time to the accession of the moderns the ability to organise was on the decrease. There was a weakening of perception, a decline of the æsthetic faculty. The chaotic condition of this period was like the darkness which always broods over the world before some cleansing force sweeps it clean and ushers in a new and greater cycle.

The period of advancement of these old methods extends from prehistoric times to the beginning of the nineteenth century. On the walls of the caverns in Altamira and the Dordogne are drawings of mammoths, horses and bison in which, despite the absence of details, the actual approach to nature is at times more sure and masterly than in the paintings of such highly cultured men as Botticelli and Pisanello. The action in some of them is pronounced; and the vision, while simple, is that of men conscious of a need for compactness and balance. Here the art is simply one of outline, heavy and prominent at times, light and almost indistinguishable at others; but this grading of line was the result of a deeper cause than a tool slipping or refusing

to mark. It was the consequence of a need for rhythm which could be obtained only by the accentuation of parts. The drawings were generally single figures, and rarely were more than two conceived as an inseparable design. Later, the early primitives used symmetrical groupings for the same purpose of interior decorating. Then came simple balance, the shifting and disguise of symmetry, and with it a nearer approach to the *imprévu* of nature. This style was employed for many generations until the great step was taken which brought about the Renaissance. The sequential aspect of line appeared, permitting of rhythm and demanding organisation. Cimabue and Giotto were the most prominent exponents of this advance. From that time forward the emotion derived from actual form was looked upon by artists as a necessary adjunct to a picture. With this attitude came the aristocracy of vision and the abrogation of painting as mere exalted craftsmanship.

After that the evolution of art was rapid. In the contemplation of solidly and justly painted figures the artist began to extend his mind into space and to use rhythm of line that he might express himself in depth as well as surfacely. Thus he preconised organisation in three dimensions, and by so doing opened the door on an infinity of æsthetic ramifications. From the beginning, tone balance — that is, the agreeable distribution of blacks, whites and greys — had gone forward with the development of line, so that at the advent of depth in painting the arrangement of tones became the medium through which all the other qualities were made manifest.

In the strict sense, the art of painting up to a hundred years ago had been only drawing. Colour was used only for ornamental or dramatic purposes. After the first simple copying of nature's tints in a wholly restricted manner, the use of colour advanced but little. It progressed toward harmony, but its dramatic possibilities were only dimly felt. Consequently its primitive employment for the enhancement of the decorative side of painting was adhered to. This was not because the older painters were without the necessary pigments. Their colours in many instances were brighter and more permanent than ours. But they were satisfied with the effects obtained from black and white expression. They looked upon colour as a delicacy, an accessory, something to be taken as the gourmet takes dessert. Its true significance was thus obscured beneath the artists' complacency. As great an artist as Giorgione considered it from the conventional viewpoint, and never attempted to deviate toward its profounder meanings. The old masters filled their canvases with shadows and light without suspecting that light itself is simply another name for colour.

The history of modern art is broadly the history of the development of form by the means of colour — that is to say, modern art tends toward the purification of painting. Colour is capable of producing all the effects possible to black and white, and in addition of exciting an emotion more acute. It was only with the advent of Delacroix, the first great modern, that the dramatic qualities of colour were intelligently sensed. But even with him the conception was

so slight that the effects he attained were but meagrely effective. After Delacroix further experiments in colour led to the realistic translation of certain phases of nature. The old static system of copying trees in green, shadows in black and skies in blue did not, as was commonly believed, produce realism. While superficially nature appeared in the colours indicated, a close observation later revealed the fact that a green tree in any light comprises a diversity of colours, that all sunlit skies have a residue of yellow, and hence that shadows are violet rather than black. This newly unearthed realism of light became the battle cry of the younger men in the late decades of the nineteenth century, and reached parturition in the movement erroneously called Impressionism, a word philologically opposed to the thing it wished to elucidate. The ancients had painted landscape as it appeared broadly at a first glance. The Impressionists, being interested in nature as a manifestation in which light plays the all-important part, transferred it bodily onto canvas from that point of view.

Cézanne, looking into their habits more coolly, saw their restrictions. While achieving all their atmospheric aims, he went deeper into the mechanics of colour, and with this knowledge achieved form as well as light. This was another step forward in the development of modern methods. With him colour began to near its true and ultimate significance as a functioning element. Later, with the aid of the scientists, Chevreul, Bourgeois, Helmholtz and Rood, other artists made various departures into the field

of colour, but their enterprises were failures. Then came Matisse who made improvements on the harmonic side of colour. But because he ignored the profounder lessons of Cézanne he succeeded only in the fabrication of a highly organised decorative art. Not until the advent of the Synchromists, whose first public exhibition took place in Munich in 1913, were any further crucial advances made. These artists completed Cézanne in that they rationalised his dimly foreshadowed precepts.

To understand the basic significance of painting it is necessary to revise our method of judgment. As yet no æsthetician has recorded a *rationale* for art valuation. Taine put forth many illuminating suggestions regarding the fundamentals of form, but the critics have paid scant heed. Prejudice, personal taste, metaphysics and even the predilections of sentiment, still govern the world's judgments and appreciations. We are slaves to accuracy of delineation, to prettiness of design, to the whole suite of material considerations which are deputies to the organic and intellectual qualities of a work of art. It is the common thing to find criticisms — ever from the highest sources — which praise or condemn a picture according to the nearness of its approach to the reality of its subject. Such observations are confusing and irrelevant. Were realism the object of art, painting would always be infinitely inferior to life — a mere simulacrum of our daily existence, ever inadequate in its illusion. The moment we attach other than purely æsthetic values to paintings — either ancient or modern — we are confronted by so exten-

sive and differentiated a set of tests that chaos or error is unavoidable. In the end we shall find that our conclusions have their premises, not in the work of art itself, but in personal and extraneous considerations. A picture to be a great work of art need not contain any recognisable objects. Provided it gives the sensation of rhythmically balanced form in three dimensions, it will have accomplished all that the greatest masters of art have ever striven for.

Once we divest ourselves of traditional integuments, modern painting will straightway lose its mystery. Despite the many charlatans who clothe their aberrations with its name, it is a sincere reaching forth of the creative will to find a medium by which the highest emotions may most perfectly be expressed. We have become too complex to enjoy the simple theatre any longer. Our minds call for a more forceful emotion than the simple imitation of life can give. We require problems, inspirations, incentives to thought. The simple melody of many of the old masters can no longer interest us because of its very simplicity. As the complicated and organised forces of life become comprehensible to us, we shall demand more and more that our analytic intelligences be mirrored in our enjoyments.

II

PRECURSORS OF THE NEW ERA

THE nineteenth century opened with French art in a precarious and decadent condition. To appreciate the prodigious strides made by Géricault and Delacroix, even by Gérard and Gros, one must consider the rabid antagonism of the public toward all ornament and richness in painting and toward all subject-matter which did not inspire thoughts of inflexible simplicity. This attitude was attributable to the social reaction against the excesses of the voluptuous Louis XVI. Vien it was who, suppressing the eroticism of Boucher, instigated the so-called classic revival founded on Græco-Roman ideals. The public became so vehement in its praise of this hypocritical and austere art, that Fragonard, that delicious painter of boudoirs, was dismissed as indecent. Even the demure Greuze, who tried to rehabilitate himself by making his art a vehicle for a series of parental sermons, died a pauper. He too lacked the aridity requisite for popular taste. Chardin, the Le Nains and Fouquet were set aside: they were considered too trivial, too insufficiently archæological. Watteau's canvases were stoned by Regnault, Girodet and the other pupils of David. Lancret, Pater, Debucourt, Olivier, Gravelot, La Tour, Nattier and others met similar fates at the hands of the new classicists.

Such men as these could not find approbation in a public which demanded only allegorical, political and economic art. But David met all its requirements. He represented the antithesis of the sound freedom of the French temperament; and forthwith became the Elija of the new degeneracy. He apotheosised all that is false and decadent in art. But the adulation of him was short-lived. The French imagination is too fecund for only thorns. Ingres superceded him. This new idol, going to the Greeks for inspiration, made David fluent and charming. He studied the Italian primitives and simplified them with Byzantine and Raphaelic addenda. He had a genuine instinct for silhouette entirely lacking in his forerunner, and soon struck the first blow which marked the disintegration of David's cult.

Gérard and Gros took a further step by loosening slightly Ingre's drawing; and Géricault and Guérin completed the disruption of the David tradition. Géricault's Radeau de la Méduse brought its young and highly talented creator immediately into the public gaze, not only because of its implied blasphemy in deviating from the *méthode David*, but because the tragedy of its subject was still fresh in the national mind. Was this a clever device on the part of the painter to circumvent hostile criticism by clothing his innovations with a sympathetic theme? Perhaps; but the picture's value to us lies in that it foreshadowed the new idea in art. It forced the gate which made easier Delacroix's entrance several years later.

In retrospect the reaction against an established

order appears simple, but the world's innovators have required for their task an intellectual courage amounting to rare heroism. Heretics are regarded as dangerous madmen, and generally their only reward is the pleasure of revolt. The credit for greatness falls on those later men who avail themselves of the principles of past reactionary enterprise. So much of the energy of pioneers is spent in combating hostile criticism and indifference, that their fund of creative force is depleted. This was true in the case of Delacroix. Like all the greater painters he was self-taught. The essence of knowledge is untransmittable. True, he occasionally visited the studio of Guérin, but his real education came from the Louvre where he copied Veronese, Titian and Rubens. His insight was keen but not deep, and at first he did little more than absorb the surface aspects of others, though he did this with intelligence. Later, by devious steps both forward and back, he became the bridge from the eighteenth century to Impressionism, just as Cézanne became the stepping stone from Impressionism to art's latest manifestations.

In 1822 Delacroix exposed his first canvas, Dante et Virgile aux Enfers, one of the finest début pictures ever recorded. Superficially it is his most obvious influence of Rubens whom he deeply respected; and in it are also discoverable the exaggerations and disproportions of Michelangelo. Thiers lauded it, and so great was its popularity that the government bought it for 2,000 francs. Rubens still held him firmly two years later in the Massacre de Scio, although there were in the picture indubitable indications

of the advent of Venice. This picture was to be hung in the famous *Salon* of 1824, where Lawrence, Bonington, Fielding, and Constable (who were to have such a great influence on his later work) exposed. The Massacre de Scio was ready for shipment when, just before the *vernissage*, Delacroix saw a canvas by Constable done in the divisionistic method. At once he felt the necessity for colour expression, and going home he entirely repainted his picture.

This was the turning-point in his art. He had admired the green in Constable's landscape, and had spoken of it to the other. Constable explained that the superiority of the green in his prairies was due to the fact that he had composed it with a multitude of different greens. Here Delacroix's keen perception got to work. In his Journal he wrote: "What Constable says of the green of his prairies can be applied to all the other tones as well." By this method, primitive as it seems today, he beheld a way of augmenting the dramatic significance of his conceptions. The next year, 1825, he went to London to study the English painters at closer range. There he learned much from Bonington, as he did from Constable, and in one of his letters he wrote: "Grey is the enemy of all painting. . . . Let us banish from our palette all earth colours." And later he forecasted the Impressionistic methods by writing: "It is good not to let each brush stroke melt into the others; they will appear uniform at a certain distance by the sympathetic law which associates them. Colour obtained thus has more energy and freshness. The more opposition in colour, the more brilliance."

Delacroix's intelligence, reconnoitring along these lines, formulated other principles. Among many observations concerning colour, he wrote: "If to a composition, interesting in its choice of subject, you add a disposition of lines, which augments the impression, a chiaroscuro which seizes the imagination, and a colour which is adapted to the characters, it is then a harmony, and its combinations are so adapted that they produce a unique song. . . . A conception, having become a composition, must move in the *milieu* of a colour peculiar to it. There seems to be a particular tone belonging to some part of every picture which is a key that governs all the other tones. . . . The art of the colourist seems to be related in certain ways to mathematics and music." That he believed in the exact science of colour is further attested to by the fact that he made a dial on which noon represented red, six o'clock green, one o'clock blue, seven o'clock orange — and so on through the hours with the opposition of complementaries.

Evidences of these experimentations are dimly discerned in a number of his minor canvases done between 1827 and the Revolution. In 1832, after he had painted the admirable La Liberté Guidant le Peuple sur les Barricades, he visited Morocco. Before this event his work had contained many of the elements of sumptuousness and sensuality; but in this eastern land his colour reached maturity. Studying the productions of the native crafts in their relation to colour, he dreamed of making pictures as variegated as rugs and vases. In this he was trespassing on the precincts of Veronese who had

LES FEMMES D'ALGER DANS LEUR APPARTEMENT — DELACROIX

made pictorial use of the products of the Orient and of Africa. On his return he painted Les Femmes d'Alger dans Leur Appartement. This picture, one of his best, embodies most of his colour theories. In it we find cold shadows opposed to hot lights, and the contiguous placing of complementaries.

Delacroix looked upon himself as a colourist. But while his theories were in the main sound they did not go far enough. They were important only as a starting point. His colour is hardly noticeable today, and in no wise does it sum up his artistic interest for us. Gauguin once said that we get Delacroix's full significance in black-and-white reproduction. This comes perilously near being true. Today his pictures appear as devoid of brilliancy as those of the Venetians. Yet, when he first exhibited, he was reproached for his raucous tones. The critics called his Massacre de Scio the "massacre of painting," and added, "*il court sur les toits.*" His men and women, the shadows of whose flesh were coloured with blues and greens, were stigmatised "corpses," and he was accused of having used the morgue for his studio.

All this mattered little. Delacroix's real significance as an artist lay in his drawing which was his greatest asset. What raised him above the general run of painters, baroque and otherwise, was his slight talent for composition. Often in his Journal he speaks of the "balance of lines." He knew that with the masters of the Renaissance it was common property, and that modern painting had lost it; and he strove to reintroduce it into art. But he never got beyond

the simplest synthesis of the least compounded of Rubens's figure pieces. For instance, in the Bataille de Taillebourg — an excellent example of his dramatic method — it will be noted that the canvas opens at the bottom-centre to form a triangle of struggling forms, and that in the breach thus made the rearing charger looms white. The identical composition can be found in La Justice, La Liberté, the Janissaires à l'Attaque, La Lutte de Jacob avec l'Ange, the Enlèvement de Rébecca and the Entrée des Croisés à Jérusalem. In this last canvas, his most masterful, the triangle is complicated by a curved line running inward from the centre. This picture recalls, almost to every detail, Rubens's The Adoration of the Wise Men of the East, in the Antwerp Museum. However, it marks a great progress from the symmetricality of his *toile de début*, and though in it Rubens is consciously imitated — if not indeed plagiarised, Delacroix gets nearer to the spirit of Veronese than to that of the Flemish master.

Among the paintings wherein the simple, three-sided composition does not appear, the most notable are his animal pictures (in which he substituted the S design) and those canvases in which his momentary admiration for others (as for Veronese in the Retour de Christophe Colomb, and for the Dutch in Cromwell au Château de Windsor) made him forget himself. Even this primitive comprehension of linear balance had passed out of French painting with the death of Poussin, and its reapparition in Delacroix is analogous to the impetus toward rhythm which was given to the stiff Byzantine painting of Venice by

Nicolo di Pietro and Giovanni da Bologna in the fourteenth century.

In Rubens we find turbulent movement, as great as in life itself, organised in such a way that all the emotions, exalted, depressive, dramatic, are expressed. But in Delacroix there is merely co-ordinated action. And this action, even in the busiest centres of his canvases, is more suggestive of unrest than of movement. However, the real cause for his failure to express a spirit as modern as Rubens's lay in his inability to understand the opposition in rhythmic line-balance of three dimensions which is to be found in even the slightest of Rubens's canvases. His details are always interesting, but he never succeeded in welding them into a sequacious and interrelated whole. His high gift of invention was inadequate equipment for so difficult a feat. Compare Rembrandt's exquisite bathing girl in the London National Gallery and Delacroix's La Grèce Expirant sur les Ruines de Missolonghi. In technical treatment these two paintings are not unlike, but the scattered feeling and lack of plastic concentration in the latter emphasises the superior force of the Dutchman.

Delacroix's work fell between flat decoration and deep painting. Although in his small drawings and details he exhibits a genuine feeling for volume, as his Lion Déchirant un Cadavre shows, his constant refinements of reasoning nearly always resulted in his form being flattened out until it sometimes became commonplace. Simple balance of line defined the limits of his ability for organisation. If he had carried out in other pictures the compositional elements of his Piéta,

which had distinct movement, his work would have taken a higher place in the history of art. In many canvases his seeming fullness of form is only a richness of line — a richness, however, which had seldom been found in painting since Masaccio. This voluptuousness in Delacroix (analogous to Wagner's music) results from the balance of large dark and light masses — the fullness of chiaroscuro. It is particularly appreciable in La Justice de Trajan, La Captivité de Babylone, Repos (reminiscent of Goya's La Maja Desnuda) and his animal compositions.

Delacroix's greatest deficiency lay in his inability to recognise the difference between the inventive intelligence and the imaginative instinct. Had he understood this he could have seen that his limitless ambition was incommensurate with his comparatively small capabilities. But this mind was not sufficiently open. In fact his viewpoint at times was a petty one. Even his patriotism was chauvinistic. He was rabidly anti-Teutonic and attempted to compress all the great masters of art into the French mould. He inveighed against style in painting because France had always been barren of it. He pretended to detest Wagner, his musical prototype, and ignoring the latter's dramatic undulations, criticised him severely for his methods. Beethoven was too long for Delacroix, and Il Trovatore too complicated. However, he had a profound admiration for Titian and Mozart; and in these preferences we have the man's psychology. Both were great classicists, but both lacked that genuine and magistral fullness which was the *propre* of Beethoven and Michelangelo.

Delacroix's thoughts were on deep things rather than deep in themselves. Among the romanticists he was at home: all his life Byron and Walter Scott provided him with themes. And though he had sufficient foresight to see the hopeless trend of the painting of his day, and combated it, he did not advance. His muse was the corpse of Venetian art. He was the brake which put an end to the reactionary tendencies of art. His discoveries did not reach fruition until Impressionism, twenty years after his death.

In all his struggles destiny seemed to conspire to bring about his fame. In 1824, the very year he brought colour into his painting, Géricault, who gave promise of outstripping him, died. Constable and Turner came forward with their achievements. David's influence had died out, and the painter himself was an exile in Brussels. Fromentin tells us that Géricault helped paint Delacroix's first canvas. Certain it is that several of the great Englishmen painted some of his second. This, no doubt, taught Delacroix much. In 1827 the government ordered Justinien Composant les Institutes. All France rallied round his standard. He was decorated by Louis Philippe; and at the age of thirty he was proclaimed a great master by one of the leading critics of the day.

From the first he had had the backing of men respected as authorities. But though they helped make his position tenable, they obfuscated his true significance by their purely literary appreciations. Gautier, Dumas, Baudelaire, Stendhal and Merimée — there was none whose temperament was not either romantic or ideal-

istic. They could not see that, though he strove with them for modernity of expression, his language was unmodern. However, Ernest Chesneau, Théophile Silvestre, Eugène Véron and C. P. Landon have all given us side-lights on his methods, and, in this, their expositions are of value.

But, though the men of letters did not understand him thoroughly, several of his fellow painters recognised his eclecticism. Among them was Thomas Couture who, in his highly instructive booklet, Méthodes et Entretiens d'Atelier, had the audacity to point out the painter's selective habits. In the main his charge was just. Delacroix's first canvas contains influences of both Rubens and Michelangelo. His second picture echoes Rubens, the Venetians and Goya. Later came more prominent evidences of Titian and Veronese. Delacroix was museum-bred. He absorbed impressions avidly, and did his best work only after he had undergone an intellectual experience. Had his art been truly expressive of all that was within him, he would have been in turn — diluted, to be sure — a Giotto, a Caravaggio, a Rubens, a Rembrandt. He felt the call of these men, but instead of halting at appreciation, he tried to use them. But the old masters, like the lords of the earth, are not amenable to high-handed demands.

The diversity of his pursuits, which sprang from a desire to compete with Leonardo da Vinci, smacks of the dilettante. His great mistake was that he did not separate his capabilities from his desires. Had he done so he would have produced small figure pieces of gem-like

richness and voluminous composition. Enthusiasm is not the proper equipment for extended labour. It burns out too soon, and is kept alive only by quick and brilliant results. For this reason his pictures are viewed to better effect framed and in galleries than as mural decorations. In trying to paint monumental subjects on extensive canvases he lost that spirit of organisation which would have been his on more limited surfaces. One of his finest expositions of colour, La Lutte de Jacob avec l'Ange, in a chapel at Saint Sulpice, is ineffective because its surface is too large for his treatment of the theme. Delacroix in reality was a painter of still-life in the broad meaning of the term, just as Rembrandt and Cézanne were still-life painters. He failed in the accomplishment of his larger programme because his vision was too restricted to permit him to weld his details into great ensembles, as Rubens did. His ambition outstripped his power, and strive as he might, he could not make up the discrepancy by reasoning. Undoubtedly he sensed his own weakness, for all his days he was in continual pursuit of system. System was to him what law was to the old masters. Herein he was reflecting the rationalistic philosophers of his day who substituted theory for observation.

Were all Delacroix's paintings destroyed and his Journal and drawings saved, his *apport* to art would be but imperceptibly decreased. We should still possess his linear compositions and his colour theories — his two significant gifts to modern art. Without the liberation of draughtsmanship expressed in the former, Courbet's struggle would have been more difficult, and rhythm in drawing

would have had to wait for another resuscitator. Without his colour theories Impressionism would have been postponed for half a century; Van Gogh could not have done his best pictures; and the Pointillists, with their system of complementaries, might never have existed. Delacroix was the first to speak of simultaneity in painting, on which phrase has recently been founded a school; and he sketched a dictionary of art terms and definitions which even now, after fifty years, is far more intelligent than present-day academic precepts.

Let us regard Delacroix as a great pioneer who fought against the zymotic formalism of his day and by so doing opened up a new era of expression. He is the link in the chain which holds the brilliant gems of painting. If he himself fell short of genius, he nevertheless fulfilled a destiny which intrinsically is in many ways more fine: he made genius possible for those who were to come after him.

The other man who contributed vitally to modern colour theories was J. M. W. Turner, born in 1775, one year before Constable. Like Delacroix he had ardent and influential defenders; and the coincidence is emphasised by the fact that between these two great colour innovators there existed a striking thematic similarity. Ruskin took care that Turner should taste those beneficent honours which the world generally withholds from a painter during his lifetime. He accomplished this feat by praise which was largely enthusiasm and by criticism which spelled partiality. But a panegyric not founded on accuracy and authenticity defeats its own object in the

end. Turner himself remarked that Ruskin discovered recondite points in his painting of which he, as the artist, was ignorant. This might have been true, or it might have been sarcasm. But whether Ruskin or Turner knew more about the latter's art, the fact remains that the author of Modern Painters overestimated the painter for a reason totally inapposite to æsthetic consideration: — the almost photographic perfection of his canvases. Later, when the *spirituel* Whistler tarnished this English didactician's reputation for infallibility, the latter's pronunciamentos were questioned, in some quarters ridiculed. And Turner, accepted because of Ruskin's assurances, became suspect.

But no amount of effulgent literary criticism can obscure the authentic accomplishments of this poor barber's son. Turner's contributions to the colour methods of the eighties were too large, and his imitators too bold, for the fact to be longer ignored. In his Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus, The Fighting Téméraire and especially in Rain, Steam and Speed, he had begun to divide the surfaces of his objects into minute *touches* of different colours— not, perhaps, for the purpose of heightening the emotional qualities of the paintings as a whole, but for the primitive reason that the device gave accuracy to them as representations of nature. These pictures Monet and Pissarro studied closely during the Franco-Prussian War, and there is no doubt that the result of this study determined the direction taken by the Impressionists. Turner's earlier pictures had been too sombre to meet the demand for brilliancy in that first great modern school, and the can-

vases in which his vision of sunlight began to take form had not yet been painted. These later pictures, with their light tonality and their full use of misty blue and gold, had a further influence on the Impressionists' conception of colour.

When Monet and Pissarro went to London in 1871 they had been habituated to the use of broad flat tones, and were astonished at Turner's extraordinary snow and ice effects which were obtained by juxtaposing little spots of diverse colour and by the gradating of tones. On their return to France they both made use of this striking artifice, and developed it, in conjunction with Delacroix's theories, into what later an unknown humorist of the *Charivari* named Impressionism. This process was given further impetus by another Frenchman, Jongkind, called the European Hiroshige. There is more than a superficial analogy between Jongkind and Turner; and the Impressionists, first under the influence of Corot and Courbet, found the effects they sought by using the purity of Turner with the *facture* of Jongkind. It was thus they were brought back to the theories of Delacroix which they had partially abandoned. This return had a profound *raison d'être*, for between the last phase of Delacroix and the later sketches of Turner there is a similarity which was apparent even to their contemporaries. But though the resemblance was as pronounced as that between Turner and the Impressionists, the eulogists of that movement chose to ignore and, in some cases, to deny it.

This new method of using colour did not constitute the only debt the Impressionists owed

Turner. They also found in him an added inspiration toward freedom of arrangement and unconventionality of design. The landscape painters before Turner's day conceived their out-of-door pictures in more or less definite moulds. A tree in one man's canvas, being an idealistic conception, was difficult of differentiation from a tree in another's. All their pictures were permeated by the same motif. But Turner, along with Constable and Bonington, began putting character into landscapes. As a consequence their pictures exuded a new freedom of arrangement.

To appreciate Turner fully we must overlook his astonishing ability for transcription — a heritage from his architectural days — and consider him as a man who loved nature so ardently that it was impossible for him to approach it intellectually. His sketches, both in water-colour and oil, were, unlike those of the Impressionists, rarely done in the open. He conceived them in pencil, wrote upon his clouds, trees and stones the colours he saw in them, and later, in the solitude of his studio, "worked them up." Had the Impressionists, after their frenzied *séances* before models, taken their canvases home, organised and modified them, they would no doubt have produced greater net results artistically. Organisation, in its finest sense, comes only through contemplation and reflection; and while Turner did not possess the genius for rhythm in any of its manifestations, he nevertheless realised that mere truth does not make a picture. The Sun of Venice Going to Sea is as excellent as anything Monet or Sisley has ever done. In Turner there

is a feeling for the grandiose such as few moderns possess. Did this gift come from Claude whom he delighted in imitating? Even Constable spoke of a Turner canvas as the most complete work of genius he ever saw. But this was the *beau geste* of a contemporary who wished to appear broad-minded. The truth lay further down the slope. Turner undoubtedly showed genius in his competent copying of even the most insignificant of of nature's accidents. The composition of The Devil's Bridge is the foundation on which are built many of Monet's pictures; and the Rain, Steam and Speed canvas can hang beside La Gare St. Lazare without loss to either.

Delacroix re-established an Italian mode of expression and tried to make of it a modern language. Turner, in a new language, spoke of ancient things. But Courbet ignored all method, and withal became the father of latter-day art. In him was the embryo of that distinctly modern spirit which demands visible proof before believing. Like William of Orange, he arose triumphant above every opposition. His art stemmed temperamentally from the Dutch and Spaniards, for while he imitated no one, he was unconsciously influenced by many. So complete was his assimilation of great men that in his expression they all had a place. He himself says that he studied antiquity as a swimmer crosses a river. The academicians were drowned there. So was Delacroix. Courbet learned in his passage that in adaptation is the confession of sterility. But though he avoided paraphrasing and copying the old masters, we find throughout his life recurring traces of Van Dyke, Zurbarán, Delacroix,

Rembrandt, El Greco, Géricault, Ribera, Velazquez and that little known Valencian master, Juan de Juanes.

Courbet was considered an ignorant, vulgar and brutal peasant. But this judgment was the outgrowth of public miscomprehension rather than of any authentic evidence in the man himself. Courbet was the epitome of that unstudied naturalism which is antipodal to the hypocrisies of society. France, during his day, was governed by the dictates of theatricalism. Its ideals were those of Renaissance Italy, and its artistic attitude reflected a refinement of vision approaching decadence. Courbet's deportmental crudities alone were a source of antagonism, and when to these were added scorn and indifference the hostility against him became violent. But temperamentally he was aristocratic. The peasant mind is fundamentally traditional: Courbet was violently revolutionary. Nor did he lack fineness of mind. His early portraits embodied the subtleties of modelling in Rembrandt as well as the extraordinary niceties of characterisation in El Greco. The compositions of his pictures alone belie any coarseness of fibre in the man. They are founded on a weakened S which, since the decay of Byzantine art, had done valiant service for the most exalted painters such as Rubens and Tinteretto. This compositional figure appears, either exact or varied, in his Le Combat de Cerfs, Le Retour de la Conférence, Chien et Lièvres, and L'Enterrement à Ornans.

Courbet's reputation for vulgarity was derived more from his lack of facile fluency, so common in the French tradition, than from a basic under-

standing of the structural synthesis of his work. And this misconception of him was aggravated by his being the first painter unwilling to accept praise as the public chose to dole it out. He was a self-advertiser, and such men as George Bernard Shaw are but echoes of his methods. He pushed his way to the front unceasingly, and continually theorised as a means of silencing his adversaries. He regarded all public demonstration as *blague*, and later in life carried this attitude into politics. Whistler, his pupil, was quick to sense the advantage of his teacher's methods; and it is the irony of fate that this ineffectual American was believed and respected while Courbet was abused and ridiculed and forced to die in exile. He had carried his assaults too far. "To be not only a painter but a man," he wrote at one time. "To create a living art — this is my aim." It is a masterly statement of his real ambitions. He was intensely interested in life, as were Rubens and Cellini. "You want me to paint a goddess?" he exclaimed. "Show me one!" In this *mot* he summed up the very spirit of modern times. It expressed the new realism found in such widely separated men as Dostoievsky, Zola, George Moore, Conrad, Andreiev, Theodore Dreiser, Gerhart Hauptmann, Richard Strauss, Debussy, Korngold, Sibelius, Manet, Renoir, Sorolla and Zorn.

It is strange how Courbet, so far removed from the French temperament, should, at the crucial period of his life, have reverted to a French gesture by refusing the cross of the Legion of Honor. But in that famous letter of rejection, written in a café and mailed with a grandiloquent

toss in the presence of Fantin-Latour, he summed up aptly the man of genius who, though avid for honour, throws it away at the moment of attainment. Not even Napoleon was more concerned with the thoughts of posterity than Courbet, and some of the artist's letters are not dissimilar in tone to the bombastic *manifestos* of certain ultra-modern schools. At the time of his first exhibition he wrote to Bruyas: "I stupefy the entire world. I am triumphant not only over the moderns but the ancients as well. Here is the Louvre gallery. The Champs Elysées does not exist, nor the Luxembourg. There is no more Champs de Mars. I have thrown consternation into the world of art." This spirit of monumental self-confidence, so startling to a generation whose taste was measured by the decadent poetry of Baudelaire, brought frantic sarcasm hurtling about his head. This troubled Courbet little. He valued friendships only in so far as they were useful. It was Meissonier who said in a Paris *salon*, when standing before the famous Femme de Munich which Courbet had painted in a few hours for Baron Remberg: "It is no longer a question of art, but of dignity. From now on Courbet must be as one dead to us."

Charles Baudeliare, who helped fight the battle for Wagner, Poe, Delacroix, Manet and Monet, tentatively praised him at first, but later allied himself with the public and became his bitterest assailant. It was not surprising. A poet so superficial as to call Delacroix "a haunted lake of blood" could not be expected to appreciate the *terre à terre* qualities of this master of Ornans. And Courbet was so little French that he was

incomprehensible to his national contemporaries. He disclaimed all tradition, swore he had no forerunners, and struck blindly into the unknown. For a man without genius this would have been fatal, but, after all, only a genius would attempt such things.

Courbet was disgusted with the allegory and romance of his time. His nature cried aloud for a pose that was natural, for a landscape that resembled the out-of-doors, for objects in which life was discernible. Consequently the critics and painters of his day put him aside either indifferently or insolently. They could not understand a work of art which did not delineate a literary episode or in which the postures were not taken direct from the theatre. Courbet needed no literature to paint great pictures. He went straight to nature, and his compositions grew out of his sheer enjoyment in visible objects, whether they were dramatic or not. To the public his pictures appeared ugly, even repellent. Here was a man who painted a funeral realistically — *Dieu m'en garde!* With only the example of canvases filled with familiar gods and goddesses and melting nudes in golden pink, he dared set forth, in a sacred theme, peasants' faces and peasants' shoes, cloudy skies, and holes in the brown earth. To those who had come to look upon art as something ethereal and evanescent, L'Enterrement à Ornans was more than blasphemy. It was this picture, falling like a bomb into the midst of the vagaries of his time, that sounded the death knell of romanticism. It was the last spade of earth on the graves of the classicists. The mere picture was sensation enough,

L'ENTERREMENT À ORNANS COURBET

but Courbet was not content to let the matter rest there. At the time of his exhibition in 1855, held in a barrack of his own building on the Rond Point de l'Alma, he wrote a defensive and provocative preface to his catalogue. In it he proclaimed himself not only the first realist, but realism itself.

Géricault's Radeau de la Méduse and Delacroix's Dante et Virgile aux Enfers were acceptable to the public, the one because of its dramatic interest, the other because of its literature. But L'Enterrement à Ornans entirely lacked the popular qualities of these two other pictures. It was full of rugged and hardy precision. Its insolent ugliness of subject-matter and its implied indifference to all tradition, seemed to express the quintessence of artistic degradation and sordidness. At first view the picture appears to have been inspired by El Greco's Obsequies of the Count of Orgaz, but it is more likely that these peasants of Ornans, each a notable of the town, with their indifferent expressions and awkward gestures, were attributable to The Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew of Ribera and La Folle of Géricault, rather than to the master of Toledo. But that the Spanish helped paint it is evident: some parts of the landscape are taken bodily from their canvases. Meier-Graefe states that this funeral picture, like most of the representative pictures of the nineteenth century, is not representative of the artist himself. But did Meier-Graefe understand more profoundly the synthesis of composition found in individual painters, he would have seen that here was the famous S composition which was used throughout

the painter's life. Instead of being set on end, as was the practice of the Italians, it is used laterally and extends from left to right in depth.

In colour also this picture is representative of Courbet, for it shows his limitations in that medium. Delacroix brought a new palette to painting, but could not use it. Courbet contented himself with a palette as meagre as that of Caravaggio and Guercino. And yet, though colour has come latterly to mean tactile form in its highest sense, this black canvas, when placed beside either an Ingres, a David, a Delacroix or a Gérard, appears less flat and inconsequential than the latter. The form is even suggestive of Rembrandt, Giotto, Cézanne and Renoir.

Champfleury was the only friend of Courbet who dared defend him. Delacroix was set against him, and the critics, without undertsanding him, obscured the true importance of his art by talking of his want of transcendentalism and sentiment. Especially were his landscapes the butt of their ridicule, for painters up to that time had made use of conventional arrangements of dainty trees copied for their drawing and tone. In Courbet all this was changed. He organised landscapes as he did still-lives and nudes. Objects, as such, meant nothing to him. In this he struck a new and modern note which the good people of his day considered not only bad art but a slur upon the spiritual meanings of nature. Even in Les Baigneuses, where the figures are unimportant, the trees are superb. In La Grotte he went further, for here the figure was part of the whole. His paintings of the hills about Ornans had a movement which gave off a sensation of weight

entirely new in painting. In Les Grands Châtaigniers he reached his apogee in landscape painting. This picture is greater than those of any of the Englishmen.

Though many critics have written that Millet influenced Courbet, the reverse is the truth. The former's life work was largely a repetition of the lights and darks found in Courbet's earlier pictures. Les Casseurs de Pierres is far greater than anything Millet has ever done, despite the vast popularity of such purely sentimental pictures as The Angelus and The Man with the Hoe. Courbet could never have been satisfied with the angularity and absence of rhythm in the other's work. In Millet's best canvases one finds at most only a parallelism of lines, and in his lesser pictures even this amateurish attempt at organisation is lacking. But in Les Casseurs de Pierres the arrangement is one which recalls the competency of linear balance and development in Tintoretto's Minerva Expelling Mars.

When Courbet entered painting, he had neither prejudices nor a *parti pris*. He tested his ability before engaging his full complement of resources. Though untutored, he had that cast of intelligence which no amount of study can produce and no amount of adverse criticism influence. Delacroix, on the other hand, was the archetype of the highly cultured and educated man. He foresaw the necessity for radical reform, but was unable to bring it about significantly. Courbet instinctively projected himself into that void at the brink of which tradition halts and the unknown begins. And because he was a man of genius he did not return empty-handed.

The art of Courbet was too aristocratic to be appreciated. Not aristocratic in the Delacroix sense, but isolated and superior. Rejecting the colour discoveries of his day, he created his own materials. Delacroix foreshadowed the medium which was to serve as a vehicle for the achievement of future generations, but it was Courbet who brought to art a new metal attitude without which there would be no excuse for modern painting. By turning men's thoughts from ancient Italy to the actualities of their own day, and by expelling the literary canvas from art, he left those who came after him free to evolve a medium which would translate the new vision. Delacroix's heritage to art was intellectual, Courbet's dynamic. And though objectively the work of Courbet is the uglier and less gracious, in it there is more of the sublime. But both men are indispensable, and have a just claim to the eternal respect of posterity.

The construction of form as voluminous phenomena — that integer of modern painting which was lacking in Delacroix, Turner and Courbet, but which has become one of the leading preoccupations of present-day artists — was introduced by Honoré Daumier. This painter who, unlike his three great contemporaries, fought for the pure love of the fight, was celebrated as a caricaturist at twenty-five. Such fame was warranted, for he was unquestionably the greatest and most trenchant caricaturist the world has ever produced. From 1835 to 1848 he made capital of all those many catastrophes which overtook France. Only the curtailing of the freedom of the press on December 2, 1848, put an

end to his career as publicist. This culmination of his editorial activities was a beneficial thing for both Daumier and the world, for it permitted him freedom to devote himself wholly to the development of the larger side of his genius. He endeavoured to interest his friends in his painting; but too long had he been known as a critic of current topics for them to look with serious eyes upon his more solid endeavours.

But though neglected by his friends, Daumier holds a position of tremendous importance in relation to the moderns. His work developed along lines unthought-of by either Delacroix or Courbet. Even his cartoons were more than clever pictorial comments on national events. Intrinsically they were great pieces of rugged flesh which had all the appearance of having been chiselled out of a solid medium with a dull tool. The richness of his line is as complete as in Rembrandt's etchings; and his economy of means reached a point to which painters had not yet attained. His significance, however, lies more especially in his new method of obtaining volume than in the flexibility of his line drawings. He built his pictures in tone first. The drawing came afterward as a direct result of the tonal volumes. This new manner of painting permitted him a greater subtlety and fluency than Courbet possessed. In fact, Daumier's comprehension of form in the subjective sense was greater than that of any Frenchman up to his time. Compare, for instance, Daumier's canvas, Les Lutteurs, with Courbet's picture of the same name. The massiveness of the one is monumental. One feels the weight of the two struggling men, heavy and

shifting, clinging and panting. They are modelled by a craftsman who can juggle deftly with his means. In Courbet's picture the figures are seen carefully copied in a strained pose by one who has not the complete mastery of his tools. In Daumier's picture we also sense that elusive but vital quality called mental attitude. Superficially it is almost indistinguishable from it negation, but to those who know its significance, it is of permeating importance.

Contour and shading to his forerunners had meant two separated and distinct steps in the construction of form. Daumier created both qualities simultaneously as one emotion. Depth with other painters was obtained by carrying their figures into the background by the means of line and perspective. With Daumier it meant a plastic building up of volume from the background forward. The feeling we have before his canvases that we are looking at form itself and not merely an excellent representation of it, is as strong as it is in a greater way when we stand before a Leonardo da Vinci. In this he gave proof that he was a draughtsman in the most vital sense. Unless he had felt form uniquely, Le Repos des Saltimbanques and Le Bain would have been impossible of creation. This last picture sums up what Carrière aspired to but failed to attain.

Recalling the great masters of form we instinctively visualise Michelangelo first. For this reason perhaps Michelangelo is regarded the major influence in Daumier. "*Il avait du Michel Ange dans la peau*," say the French: and certain it is that Daumier's colossal simplicity and feeling

LE BAIN

DAUMIER

for tactility were derived from the Renaissance master. But only in one picture, a composition called La République — 1848, do we find any direct and conscious influence. Frankly this is but a modernisation of one of the sibyls on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. The truth is Daumier is more akin to Rembrandt than to Michelangelo. But there is in him none of the conscious copying of Rembrandt that we find, for instance, in Joshua Reynolds. The latter, admiring Rembrandt, essayed to equal his power by imitating his externals with academic processes. Daumier, temperamentally affiliated with his master, went deeper. Putting aside the results of Rembrandt's final brush strokes, he studied the very functioning procedure of his art. Both used the human figure as a *terrain* for the unceasing struggle of light against dark. In the process of painting the infinite play and by-play of opposed values on a given theatre, they produced form as an inevitable result.

A critic has stated of Daumier: "He left hardly anything but sketches, splashes of colour that resolve themselves into faces. . . . " It is said without attempt at profundity. Nevertheless the remark unsuspectingly touches the crucial point of Daumier's significance. The very resolution of those "splashes of colour" into faces is the prefiguration of the modern conception of form. In this particular Daumier, even more than Rembrandt, was the avant-courier of Cézanne. This latter artist, through his concern with the play of one colour on another, gave birth to form more intensely than did either of the older men. Too much stress cannot be

laid on Daumier's contribution to modern painting. By regarding the two drawings, La Vierge à l'Écuelle and Renaude et Angélique — the one by Correggio in chalk, the other by Delacroix in water-colour — we perceive the attainment of form by less profound methods. But neither possesses the significance of Daumier's work.

Of Daumier's colour little need be said. At times it emerges from its sombreness and blossoms forth in all the hot softness of now the Venetians, of again the Spainards; but compared with the artist's genius for plastic form it is of subsidiary importance.

Although the inception of Daumier's greatness can be traced to Rembrandt, he reacted to many influences. Suggestions of Monnier and Granville are to be found in his work. Decamps's Sonneurs de Cloches was studied by him and emulated. His simplifications stemmed from Ingres, and his caricature of Guizot had the same qualities as that master's portraits. Delacroix also had some trifling influence on him in such paintings as Don Quichotte. But Daumier's influence on others is more direct and far-reaching than his own garnerings of inspiration. He foreshadowed the formal abbreviations of Toulouse-Lautrec, Forain and Steinlen, and he affected, more than is commonly admitted, the works of Manet, Degas, and Van Gogh. In his sculptured pieces, Ratapoil and Les Émigrants, he paved the way for Meunier and Rodin. Even such minor men as Max Beerbohm learned much from him without understanding him. And apart from the vital new methods he brought to painting, the originality of his subject-matter led modern

men to copy him thematically. Le Drame fathered a whole series of Degas's paintings.

Daumier is only beginning to receive the intelligent appreciation which in time may engulf his eminent contemporary, Courbet. For if choice there is between the intrinsically artistic achievements of the painter of L'Enterrement à Ornans and the creator of Silène, the preference rests with Daumier.

The forces underlying the development of genius, working in conjunction with the right circumstances, produce the fertilising methods which nature uses to bring about a final flowering of a long period of intense germination. Before the greatest eras of all art the battles have been fought and won. The descendants of the pioneers become the introspective and creative souls who open, free from the stain of combat, to the sun of achievement. Delacroix, Turner, Courbet, Daumier — these are the men who cleared the ground and thereby made possible a new age of æsthetic creation. To Delacroix belongs the credit for giving an impetus to the vitalisation of colour, and for freeing drawing from the formalisms of the past. Turner raised the tonality of colour, and introduced a new method for its application. Courbet heightened uniformly the signification of objects in painting, and handed down a mental attitude of untraditional relativity. And Daumier conceived a new vision of formal construction. These men were the pillars of modern painting.

III

ÉDOUARD MANET

THE purely pictorial has always been relished by the public. The patterns of the mosaicists and very early primitives, the figured stuffs of the East and South, the vases of China and Persia, the frescos on the walls of Pompeii, the drawings and prints of old Japan — all are examples of utilitarian art during epochs when the public took delight in the contemplation of images. Even the delicate designs on Greek pottery, the rigid and ponderous arts of architectural Egypt and the drawings and adorned totem poles of the North American Indians are relics of times when the demand for art was created by the masses. For the most part all these early crafts were limited to simple designs, wholly obvious to the most rudimentary mind. The ancients were content with a representation of a natural object, the likeness of a familiar animal, the symmetry of an ornamental border, an effigy of a god in which their abstract conceptions were given concrete form. At that time the artist was only a craftsman — a man with a communistic mind, content to follow the people's dictates and to reflect their taste. Art was then democratic, understood and admired by all. It did not raise its head about the mean level; it was abecedary, and consequently comprehensible.

When the Greek ideal of fluent movement took birth in art and became disseminated, drawing, painting and sculpture began to grow more rhythmic and individual. Slowly at first and then more and more swiftly, art became insulated. The popular joy in the native crafts, despite the impetus of centuries behind it, decreased steadily. The antagonism of the masses to the artist sprang up simultaneously with the disgust of the artist for the masses. It was the inevitable result of the artist's mind developing beyond them. He could not understand why they were no longer in accord with him; and they, finding him in turn unfathomable, considered him either irrational or given over to fantastic buffoonery. So long had they been the dictator of his vision that his emancipation from their prescriptions left them astounded and angered at his audacity. The nobles then, feeling it incumbent upon them to defend this new luxury of art, stepped into the breach, and for a time the people blindly patterned their attitude on that of their superiors. Later came the disintegration of the nobility; its caste being lost, the people no more imitated it. From that time on, although there were a few connoisseurs, the large majority was hostile to the artist, and made it as difficult as possible for him to live. He was looked upon as a madman who threatened the entire social fabric. His isolation was severe and complete; and while many painters strove to effect a reinstatement in public favour, art for 300 years forced its way through a splendid evolution in the face of neglect, suspicion and ridicule.

For so many generations had the public looked

upon art as the manifestation of a disordered and dangerous brain that they found it difficult to recognise a man in whose work was the very pictorial essense they had originally admired. This man was Édouard Manet. Instead of being welcomed for his reversion to decoration, strangely enough he was considered as dangerous as his contemporary heretics, Delacroix and Courbet. Courbet was at the zenith of his unpopularity when Manet terminated his apprenticeship under Couture. The young painter had had numerous clashes with his academic master, and the latter had prophesied for him a career as reprehensible as Daumier's. Spurred on by such incompetent rebukes, Manet determined to launch himself single-handed into the vortex of the æsthetic struggle. This was in 1857. For two years thereafter he put in his time to good purpose. He travelled in Holland, Germany and Italy, and copied Rembrandt, Velazquez, Titian and Tintoretto. These youthful preferences give us the key to his later developments. In 1859 he painted his Le Buveur d'Absinthe, a canvas which showed all the ear-marks of the romantic studio, and which exemplified the propensities of the student for simplification. It was a superficial, if enthusiastic, piece of work, and the *Salon* of that year was fully justified in rejecting it. Two years later Manet had another opportunity to expose. In the meantime he had painted his La Nymphe Surprise which, though one of his best canvases, contained all the influence of a hurriedly digested Rembrandt and a Dutch Titian.

In 1861 these influences were still at work,

but the *Salon* not only accepted his Le Guitarrero but, for some unaccountable reason, awarded it with an honourable mention. In this picture, Manet's first Spanish adaptation, are also traces of other men. Goya and even Murillo are here — the greys of Velazquez and Courbet's modern attitude toward realism. In this canvas one sees for the first time evidences of its creator's technical dexterity, a characteristic which later he was to develop to so astonishing a degree. But this picture, while conspicuously able, is, like L'Enfant à l'Épée and also Les Parents de l'Artiste, the issue of immaturity. Such paintings are little more than the adroit studies of a highly talented pupil inspired by the one-figure arrangements of Velazquez, Mazo and Carreño. Where Manet improved on the average student was in his realistic methods. While he did not present the aspect of nature in full, after the manner of Daubigny and Troyon, he stated its generalisations by painting it as seen through half-closed eyes, its parts accentuated by the blending of details into clusters of light and shadow. This method of visualisation gives a more forceful impression as an image than can a mere accurate transcription. As slight an innovation as was this form of painting, it represented Manet's one point of departure from tradition, although it was in truth but a modification of the traditional manner of copying nature. The public, however, saw in it something basically heretical, and derided it as a novelty. The habit of ridicule toward any deviation from artistic precedent had become thoroughly fixed, ever since Delacroix's heterodoxy.

It was not until 1862 that Manet, as the independent and professional painter, was felt. Up to this time his talent and capabilities had outstripped his powers of ideation. But with the appearance of Lola de Valence the man's solidarity was evident. This picture was exposed with thirteen other works at Martinet's the year following. It was hung beside the accepted and familiar Fontainbleau painters, Corot, Rousseau and Diaz; and almost precipitated a riot because of its informalities. In these fourteen early Manets are discoverable the artist's first tendencies towards simplification for other than academic reasons. Here the abbreviations and economies, unlike those in Le Buveur d'Absinthe, constitute a genuine inclination toward emphasising the spontaneity of vision. By presenting a picture, free from the stress of confusing items, the eye is not seduced into the by-ways of detail, but permitted to receive the image as an ensemble. This impulse toward simplification was prefigured in his Angelina now hanging in the Luxembourg Gallery. Here he modelled with broad, flat planes of sooty black and chalky white, between which there were no transitional tones. While in this Manet was imitating the externals of Daumier, he failed to approach that master's form. Consequently he never achieved the plasticity of volume which Daumier, alone among the modern men, had possessed. However, despite Manet's failure to attain pliability, these early paintings are, in every way, sincere efforts toward the creation of an individual style. It was only later, after his first intoxicating taste of notoriety, that the *arriviste* spirit took possession of him and

led him to that questionable and unenviable terminus, popularity. One can imagine him, drunk with eulogy, reading some immodest declaration of Courbet's in which was set forth that great man's egoistic confidence, and saying to himself: "*Tiens! Il faut que j'aille plus loin.*"

The famous *Salon des Refusés*, called by some critics of the day the *Salon des Réprouvés*, gave Manet his chance to state in striking fashion his beliefs in relation to æsthetics. For whereas mere realism could no longer excite the animosity of the official *Salon* jury, as it had done twenty years before, immorality — or, as Manet chose to put it, *franchise* — could. Therefore Manet was barred from the company of the Barbizon school and the other favourites of the day. In the *Salon des Refusés*, which must be held to the credit of Napoleon III, those painters who had suffered at the hands of the academic judges were allowed a hearing. Whistler, Jongkind, Pissarro and Manet here made history. Manet sent Le Bain, which, through the insistence of the public, has come to be called Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe. But despite the precedent of Giorgione's Rural Concert (the Concert Champêtre in the Louvre), it was looked upon only as the latest manifestation of degeneracy in a man who gave every promise of becoming a moral pariah. The nude, contrasted as it was with attired figures, was too suggestive of sheer nakedness. Had the nude stood alone, as in Ingres's La Source, or among other nudes, as in Ingres's Le Bain Turc, the picture would have caused no comment. Its departures in method were not extravagant. The scene is laid out of doors, yet it

bears all the evidences of the studio conception; and those lights and reflections which later were brought to such perfection in the pictures of the Impressionists and Renoir, are wholly absent. But in one corner is a beautifully painted still-life of fruits, a basket and woman's attire, which alone should have made the picture acceptable. This branch of painting Manet was to develop to its highest textural possibilities.

From this time on Manet no longer used the conventional chiaroscuro of the academicians. Instead he let his lights sift and dispel themselves evenly over the whole of his groupings. This mode of procedure was undoubtedly an influence of the Barbizon painters who had done away with the brown sauce of the *soi-disant* classicists. In his rejection of details and his discovery of a means whereby effects could be obtained by broad planes, Manet was forced by necessity to take the step toward this simplification of light. Were colour to be used consistently in conjunction with his technique, it must be spread on in large flat surfaces. By diffusing his light the opportunity was made. He might have omitted the element of colour from his work and contented himself with black and white, as in the case of Courbet; but he was too sensitive to its possibilities. He had observed it in the Venetians and Franz Hals, as well as in nature; and in its breadth and brilliance he had recognised its utility in enhancing a picture's decorative beauty. Even the colour of Velazquez was at times sumptuous. Manet, because his simplicity of manner permitted a liberal application of colour, was able to augment its ornamental power. It is true

that today his large and irregular patches of tints appear grey, but, to his contemporaries, their very extension made them seem blatant and bold.

Courbet remained in great part the slave to the common vision of reality. In his efforts to attain results he sacrificed little. This, in itself, delimited his accomplishments. Nature to him appeared nearly perfect, and he painted with all the wonderment of a child opening its eyes on the world for the first time. On the other hand, Manet realised that nature's forces become objective only through an intellectual process. This attitude marked a decided step in advance of Courbet. Manet painted single figures and simple images devoid of all anecdotal significance, out of his pure love of his medium and his sheer delight in tone and contour. In other words, he represented the modern spirit which repudiates objects conducive to reminiscence, and cares only for "qualities" in art. His intentions were those of Courbet pushed to greater freedom. Unlike his master he was a virtuoso of the brush. His very facility perhaps accounts for his satisfaction with flat decoration, for it concentrated his interest on the actual *pâte* and thereby precluded a deeper research into the psychology of æsthetic emotion. But in his insistence on the æsthetic rather than the illustrative side of painting he carried forward the ideals which were to epitomise modern methods.

In this lay the impetus he gave to painting. Even with Rubens the necessities of the day forced him, in his choice of themes, to adopt a circumscribed repertoire, the subjects of which

he repeated constantly. In him we have mastery of composition with the substance as an afterthought. Delacroix conceived his canvases in the romantic mould, and adapted his compositions so as to bring out the salient characteristics of his chosen theme. This was illustration with the *arrière pensée* of organisation. Daumier struck the average between these two and conceived his subject in the form he was to use. Courbet minimised the importance of objects as such by raising them all to the same level of adaptability: but he invariably chose, as with an *idée fixe*, his subjects from the life about him. Manet cared nothing for any subject whether traditional or novel. That he generally chose modern themes was indicative of that new mental attitude which recognises the unimportance of subject-matter and urges the painter to abandon thematic research and utilise the things at hand. He made his art out of the materials nearest him, irrespective of their intrinsic topical value.

This was certainly an important step in the liberating of art from convention. It proclaimed the right of the artist to paint what he liked. Courbet would have painted goddesses if he had seen them. Manet would have painted them without having seen them, provided he had thought the result warranted the effort. Courbet, the father of naturalism, extended the scope of subject-matter, while Manet tore away the last tie which bound it to any tradition, whether Courbet's or Titian's. After him there was nothing new to paint. It is therefore small wonder that artists should now have become interested in the forces of nature rather than in

nature's mien. Manet, by his consummation of theme, foreshadowed the concern with abstractions which has now swept over the world of æsthetics. Zola, like him in other ways, never equalled him in this. L'Assommoir and Fécondité portrayed only the extremes of realism. Manet painted all things with equal pleasure. Here again is evident the continuation of that mental attitude which Courbet introduced into painting. The qualities in Manet which inclined toward abstraction have secured him the reputation for being a greater generaliser than Courbet whose brutal naturalism could not be dissociated in the public mind from concrete and strict materialism. For this contention there is substantiation of a superficial nature. But a mere tendency toward generalisation, with no other qualifications, does not indicate greatness. In fact, were this purely literal truth concerning Manet conclusive, it would tend to disqualify him in his claim to an importance greater than Courbet's. Carrière is an example of a painter who is general and nothing more. Manet had other titles to consideration.

What Manet's enduring contributions to painting were have never been surmised by the public. His recognition, coming as it did years after his most significant works had been accomplished and set aside, was due to a reversion of the public's mind to its aboriginal admirations. Manet is popular today for the same reason that the lesser works of Hokusai and Hiroshige are popular, namely: they present an instantaneous image which is at once flat and motionless. As in the days of the mosaicists and early primitives, the

appreciation of such works demands no intellectual operation. Their recognisable subjects only set in motion a simple process of memory. The Olympia, Manet's most popular painting, illustrates the type of picture which appeals strongly to minds innocent of æsthetic depth. Its mere imagery is alluring. As pure decoration it ranks with Puvis de Chavannes. But in it are all the mistakes of the later Impressionists. Manet consciously attempted the limning of light, but brilliance alone resulted. He did not realise that, in order for one to be conscious of illumination, shadow is necessary. This latter element, with its complementary, produces in us the sensation of volume. True, there is in the Olympia violent contrast between the nude body, the bed and the flowers, on the one hand, and the background, the negress and the cat, on the other; but it is only the contrast of dissimilar atmospheres. The level appearance of the picture is not relieved.

The cardinal shortcoming in a painting of this kind is that it fails to create an impression of either the aspects or the forces of nature. Such pictures are only flat representations of nature's minor characteristics. The most resilient imagination cannot endow them with form: the intelligence is balked at every essay to penetrate beyond their surface. In contemplating them one is irritated by the emptiness, or rather the solidity, of the *néant* which lies behind. Courbet called the Olympia "the queen of spades coming from her bath." Titian, had he lived today, would have styled it a phogotraph. Goya (who is as much to blame for it as either Courbet or

Titian) would have considered its shallowness an inexcusable vulgarity. In painting it undoubtedly Manet's intention was to modernise Titian's Venus Reclining now hanging in the Uffizi; just as later it was Gauguin's intention, in his La Femme aux Mangos, to endow the Olympia with a South Sea Island setting. Such adaptations are indefensible provided they do not improve upon their originals. There is no improvement in Gauguin's Venus; and Manet's picture, while it advances on Titian in attitude, is a decided retrogression viewed from the standpoint of form.

In such pictures as the Olympia, Nana and La Jarretière we recognise Manet's effort to obtain notoriety. He was not an aristocrat as was Courbet or Goya or Titian. It was not a need for freer expression that induced him to paint pictures which shocked by their unconventionality, but a desire to *abasourdir les bourgeois*. In choosing his subject-matter he always had a definite end in view in relation to the public; but his conceptions were spontaneous and were recorded without deliberation. He painted with but little thought as to his method. This fact is no doubt felt by the public and held in his favour by those who believe in the involuntary inspiration of the artist. But art cannot be judged by such childish criteria. Can one imagine Giotto, Michelangelo or, to come nearer our day, Cézanne painting without giving the closest and most self-conscious study to his procedure? Credence in the theopneusty of the painter, the poet and the musician, should have passed out with the advent of Delacroix; but

the seeming mystery of art is so deeply rooted in public ignorance that many generations must pass before it can be eradicated.

The truth is that Manet himself had no precise idea of what he really wished to accomplish. Up to the last year of his life he groped tentatively toward a goal, the outlines of which were never quite distinct. We today, looking back upon his efforts, can judge his motivating influences with some degree of surety. In bringing about the paradox of staticising Courbet, Manet feminised him. He turned Courbet's blacks and greys into pretty colours, and thereby turned his modelling into silhouette and flattened his volumes. Thus was Courbet not only made effeminate but popularised. Compare the superficially similar pictures, Le Hamac of Courbet and Manet's Le Repos. In the former the movement in composition accords with the landscape and is carried out in the pose of the woman's arms and in the disposition of the legs. The figure in the latter picture is little more than an ornament — a symmetrical articulation. Manet has here translated the rhythm of depth into linear balance. In this levelling process all those qualities which raise painting above simple mosaics are lost. A picture thus treated becomes a pattern, incapable of embodying any emotional significance. Manet's paintings are remembered because they are so instantaneous a vision of their subjects. For this same reason Goya is remembered; but beneath the Spaniard's broad oppositions of tone is a limpid depth in which the intelligence darts like a fish in an aquarium. In Manet the impassable barrier of externals

shuts out that world which exists on the further side of a picture's surface.

In Manet we have the summing up of the pictorial expression of all time. His love for decoration never left him long enough for him to experiment with the profounder phases of painting. In many of his canvases he was little more than an exalted poster-maker. His Rendezvous de Chats was frankly a primitive arrangement of flat drawing, as flat as a print by Mitsuoki. Even details and texture were eliminated from it. It was a statement of his theories reduced to their bare elements. Yet, though exaggerated, the picture was representative of his aims. A pattern to him was form. Courbet's ability to model an eye was the cause of Manet's repudiating the painter of L'Enterrement à Ornans. The two men were antithetical; and in that antithesis we have Manet's aspirations fully elucidated. Even later in life when he took the figure out of doors he was unable to shake off the influence of the silhouette. But the silhouette cannot exist *en plein air*. Light volatilises design. This knowledge accounts for Renoir's early sunlight effects. Manet never advanced so far.

The limitations and achievements of Manet are summed up in his painting, Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe. This picture is undoubtedly interesting in its black-and-white values and in its freedom from the conventions of traditional composition. At first view its theme may impress one as an attempt at piquancy, but on closer inspection the actual subject diminishes so much in importance that it might have been with equal effect a simple landscape or a still-life. There

is no attempt at composition in the classic sense. Even surface rhythm is entirely missing: the tonal masses decidedly overweigh on the left. But the picture nevertheless embodies the distinguishing features of all Manet's arrangements. It is built on the rigid pyramidal plan. From the lower left-hand corner a line, now light, now dark, reaches almost to the upper frame at a point directly above the smaller nude; and another line, which begins in the lower right-hand corner at the reclining man's elbow, runs upward to his cap, and is then carried out in the shadow and light of the foliage so that it meets the line ascending from the other side. The base of these two converging lines is formed by another line which runs from the man's elbow along his extended leg. This is the picture's important triangle. But a secondary one is formed by a line which begins at the juncture of the tree and shadow in the lower right-hand corner, extends along the cane and the second man's sleeve to his head, and then drops, by way of the large nude's head and shoulder, to the basket of fruit at the bottom. This angularity of design is seen in the work of all primitive-minded peoples, and is notably conspicuous in the early Egyptians, the archaic Greeks and the Assyrians of the eighth century B.C. It is invariably the product of the static intelligence into which the comprehension of æsthetic movement has never entered. It is the result of a desire to plant objects solidly and immovably in the ground. Those artists who express themselves through it are men whose minds are incapable of grasping the rhythmic attributes of profound composition. Manet re-

LE DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE — MANET

peats this triangular design in the Olmypia where the two adjoining pyramids of contour are so obvious that it is unnecessary to describe them. The figures in canvases such as La Chanteuse des Rues, La Femme au Perroquet, Eva Gonzalès and Émile Zola are constructed similarly; and in groups like En Bateau and Les Anges au Tombeau (the latter of which recalls, by its arrangement and lighting, the Thétis et Jupiter of Ingres) is expressed the mental immobility which characterised Conegliano, Rondinelli, Robusti and their seventeenth-century exemplars, de La Fosse, Le Moyne and Rigaud.

If, however, Manet failed in the larger tests, he excelled in his ability to beautify the surfaces of his models. His painting of texture is perhaps the most competent that has ever been achieved. In his flesh, fruits and stuffs, the sensation of hard, soft, rough or velvety exteriors reaches its highest degree of pictorial attainment. These many and varied textures are reunited in his Le Déjeuner — a canvas which must not be confused with Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe. Here we have a plant, a vase, four different materials in the boy's clothing, a straw hat, a brass jug with all its reflections, a table cloth, a wall, an old sword, glassware, fruit and liquid It is an orgy of textures, and Manet must have gloried in it. One critic of the day wondered why oysters and a cut lemon lay on the breakfast table. But we wonder why a cat with fluffy fur is not there also. Castagnary suggested that Manet, feeling himself to be the master of still-life, brought every possible texture into a single canvas for purposes of contrast and because he delighted

in the material quality of objects. But the reason goes deeper. Manet was a superlatively conscious technician, and that *sacré commodité de la brosse*, so displeasing to Delacroix, was his greatest intoxication. Hals also was seduced by it. Later, when the new vision of light was communicated to Manet by the Impressionists, his obsession for the purely technical diminished in intensity. In that topical bid for popularity, the Combat du Kerseage et de l'Alabama, we detect his interest in a new economy of means which would facilitate his search for broader illumination. This method took a step forward in Le Port de Bordeaux, and later reached maturity in his canvases painted in 1882, of which Le Jardin de Bellevue is a good example. But despite his heroic efforts, these last pictures, painted a year before he died when paralysis had already claimed him and he was devoting his time almost entirely to still-life, were without fulgency, and never approached the richness of even so slight a colourist as Monet.

Repose is a word used overmuch by modern critics to designate the dominant quality of Manet's painting. From an entirely pictorial point of view the word is applicable, but in the precise æsthetic sense it is a misnomer. The illusion of repose in Manet is accounted for by his even use of greys, as in Le Chemin de Fer, Le Port de Bordeaux, the Exécution de Maximilien and the Course de Taureaux. Even in Les Bulles de Savon, the Rendez-vous de Chats, Le Clair de Lune and Le Bar des Folies-Bergère — canvases in which is exhibited Manet's greatest opposition of tones — the ensemble is expres-

sive of monotony. Real repose, however, is something much more recondite than uniformity or tedium. It is created by a complete harmonious organisation, not by an avoidance of movement. Giotto's Death of Saint Francis and El Greco's Annunciation have a simultaneity of presentation as unique as in Manet; but, because their compositions are so rhythmically co-ordinated, they present an absolute finality of movement and thus engender an emotional as well as an occular repose.

Manet's actual innovations are small, smaller even than Courbet's. However, many critics credit him with grotesque novelties. There are very few books dealing with modern painting which do not assert that he was the first to note that flesh in the light is dazzlingly bright and of a cream-and-rose colour. But in this particular there is no improvement in Manet on the pictures of Rubens. He may have unearthed this illustrative point; certain it is he did not originate it. Yet no matter how slight his departures, we enjoy his pictures for their inherent æsthetic qualities, and not for their approximation to nature. Manet made many mistakes, but this was natural when we remember that in the whirlpool of new ambitions one is prone to forget the lessons of the past. Only by profiting by them can one go on toward the ever advancing goal of achievement. We must not forget that this new spirit of endeavour is only an impulse towards something greater, a rebellion against arbitrarily imposed obstacles. If men like Manet lost track of the fundamentals of the great art which had preceded them, it was only that their vision was clouded by new experiments.

The actual achievements of Manet epitomise the secondary in art. His attempt to combine artistic worth with popularity restricted him. That he was misunderstood at first was his own fault in continually changing his style. But acceptance or rejection by popular opinion does not indicate the measure of a painter's significance. And Manet is to be judged by his contributions to the new idea. His importance lay in that he took the second step of the three which were to exhaust the possibilities of realism. In art every genuine method is consummated before a new one can take its place. Michelangelo brought architecture to its highest point of development; Rubens, linear painting; the Impressionists, the study of light; Beethoven, the classic ideal in music; Swinburne, the rhymed lyric. In fact, only after the *épuisement* of a certain line of endeavour, is felt the necessity to seek for a new and more adequate means of expression. Manet helped bring to a close a certain phase of art, thus hastening the advent of other and greater men. His accomplishments now stand for all that is academic and student-like; and although his interest as an innovator passed out with the appearance of Pissarro and Monet, men go on imitating his externals and using his brushing. In the same sense that Velazquez is a great painter, so is Manet. His influence has served the purpose of helping turn aside the academicians from their emulation of Italian painting.

IV

THE EARLY IMPRESSIONISTS

COURBET was the first painter to turn his attention to naturalism. Manet carried forward Courbet's standard. Impressionism took the last step, and brought to a close the objectively realistic conception in painting. By this final development of naturalistic means unlimited opportunities for achievement were offered. Impressionistic methods are now employed by a vast army of painters in all parts of the world, and the number of canvases which owe their existence to these discoveries is countless. Specifically Impressionism is occular realism. It represents that side of actuality which has to do with light expressed by colour; and deals with a manner of approaching natural valuations whereby the painter is permitted to transfer a scene or subject to his canvas in such a way that it will give the spectator the sensation of dazzling light, broad atmosphere and truthful colours. To accomplish this Impressionism confines itself to the play of a light from a given source — its reflections and distributions on an object or a landscape. Therefore, it is the restricted study of the disappearance of the local colour in a model, and of the luminosity and divergencies of tones to be found in shadow. It approximates to a nature which becomes, for the moment, a theatre of chromatic light

sensations. Subject-matter gave the Impressionists no concern. They advanced materially on the spirit in Manet which led him to paint any object at hand because of its susceptibility to artistic treatment. The Impressionists painted anything, not alone for æsthetic reasons, but because all objects make themselves visible by means of light and shadow. This manner of painting was the ultimate divorce of the picture from any convention, whether of arrangement, of drawing or of a fixed palette. Herein it was an elastic process *par excellence*, with no defined limitations.

Impressionism, though analytic and self-conscious, was not based on science. One may look in vain for parallels between its theories and those of Dove, Thomas Young and Chevreul. It was the imitation, pure and simple, of the disintegrations of colour in nature's broad planes. And this achievement of *diversity in simplicity* was brought about by the only method possible: — the juxtaposition of myriad tints. In other words, Impressionism was a statement that vision is the result of colour forces coming into contact with the retina. However, the men of the movement did not see nature as an agglomeration of coloured spots, but as a series of planes made vibrant by light. To reproduce this vibration they were necessitated to use nature's methods: they broke up surfaces into sensitive parts, each one of which was a separate tint. There are no broad planes of unified colour in nature. In each natural atom are absorption and reflection; and the preponderance of either of these two attributes results in a specific colour. Before

the advent of this new school painters had made warm or cold green by combining green with yellow ochre or raw sienna, or by the admixture of blues and purples. But the Impressionists laid on these colours, pure or modified, side by side, and let the eye do the work of blending. They discovered not only that in green the shadow is tinged with blue, but that blue is the direct result of the yellow-orange of light. Every one nowadays has noticed that, in looking fixedly at a green, it appears now bluish, now yellowish; just as in listening to an orchestra we can, by focusing our attention, hear predominantly the bass or the treble. So the Impressionists observed that in the most luminous colour there is a proportion of absorption, and that in the darkest shadow there exists some reflection. The association of these molecular properties is what produces vibration in nature. By the application of these observations the Impressionists generated a feeling of *grouillement;* — the movement by contrast in the smallest parts.

In attempting to explain their canvases many commentators have credited them with systems of complementaries which resulted in grey, and with other exorbitant theories of oppositions. But one may look in vain in their work for any synthesis of scientific discoveries. Colour, not neutrality, was their aim; and, as they themselves admitted, they painted *comme l'oiseau chante.* Birds are not conscious of the metallic dissonance of diminished fifths; and the Impressionists were equally unaware of the harshness of red with green, blue with orange, yellow with violet. They only substituted a balance of cold and warm

colours for the balance of lines which the older painters had used. They copied the tints they found in nature after analysing nature's processes, in order to arrive closer to its visual effect. In one way they almost achieved colour photography, for their study, in its narrow character, was deep, and their vision was highly realistic. But whereas they depicted nature, they could call it up only in its instantaneous aspects. In this ephemerality alone were they impressionists; indeed, their methods were the most exact and probing of any painters of that time. Each hour of the day raises or lowers the colour values in nature; and he who would copy nature's form as a permanent interpretation must ignore the exactitude of its reflections and approximate only to its local colours. This latter method is more truly impressionism than the theories of the Impressionists. They repudiated local colours as being too illusory, holding that the most highly coloured object modifies its tint under the influence of the least variation of light. The point is technically true, but it is an observation in objective research, and the word Impressionism must not be accepted as explanatory of the methods of the school it designates.

By decomposing the parts of a surface, in order to represent objects in their atmospheric materiality, the Impressionists were impelled by a force stronger than a mere desire for superficial accuracy: they felt the need for complete and minute organisation in a work of art. In landscape, where the many accidentals appeared to lack cohesion, the Impressionists achieved co-ordination by a unity of light which welded all the

objects into an interdependent group. Plasticity of form had resulted from the efforts of preceding painters, but here for the first time was a plasticity of method which moulded itself like putty with the slightest change of illumination. Preoccupation in this new compositional element made its users forget, for the time being, the older precepts for obtaining composition. This forgetfulness however was not due entirely to exuberance over a novel procedure. The painters antecedent to Delacroix had used landscape as unimportant backgrounds for figures, and there was no precedent for its adaptation to organisation. Courbet had composed landscape by the linear balance of black and white volumes. The Barbizon artists had brought out-of-door painting into more general notice; but their greys were insufficient to give it more than a factitious and purely conventional unity. The Impressionists, feeling the urgency for a more virile expression in landscape work, saw a solution to their problem in the depiction of light through colour. Thus their conceptions took birth.

Their technique, like Manet's, was wholly consistent with their objective. To the Impressionists this objective seemed possessed of the merit of finality. Since Corot had carried painting out of doors and Manet had portrayed studio light from every vantage point, what indeed was left for this new group of men? They might have organised Manet or Corot, but even the most competent of such modifications would have presented an appearance like that of a Rubens or a Tiepolo. They were too avid for genuine novelty to content themselves with slight innova-

tion; and they were too modern to derive satisfaction from the stereotyped teachings of an antiquity whose tones were unemotional and whose themes were hackneyed. The spirit of servility which is willing to learn second-hand lessons and adopt indoor conceptions spelled decadence to them. Their attitude was a healthy and correct one, for the cup of linear tone-composition had been drained. They were wrong in that they threw aside the cup: they should have filled it with more powerful concepts. Their attitude was indicative of immaturity. The Impressionists in truth were the adolescents of the modern art which was born with Delacroix and Turner, and which only recently has become a concrete engine for the projection of inspiration into an infinity of possibilities.

Impressionism was more important than any preceding departure, for it turned the thoughts of artists from mere results to motivating forces, from the ripples on the surface to the power which causes the tides. It foreshadowed the philosophical idea in art which concerns itself with causes rather than effects, and thereby brought about a fundamental reform which made of painting, not a mere vision, but an idea. The Impressionists, it is true, worked from the surface down, but they had the depths ever in mind; and the posing of their problem set in motion in all serious painters that intellectual process which eventually would begin with foundations and build upward. Impressionism was the undeniable implication that the possibilities of the older art methods had been exhausted, and that a substitution of a new method, however fragmentary, was of greater

importance than the sycophantic imitations of an unapproachable past. Beneath this attitude we feel the broadness of mind which, when a mistake has been made, does not ignore causes but attaches to them different interpretations in an effort to arrive at the truth. The Impressionists kept their palette intact; but they employed its parts in a way that made new combinations possible. By doing this they unconsciously reacted against the mere dexterity of brushing with which so many painters, like Hals, Velazquez and Raeburn, became obsessed and, as a consequence, failed to heed the deeper demands of æsthetic research. By thus facilitating technique they not only reduced the difficulties attached to the production of a picture, but made the thing expressed of greater relative significance.

Pissarro, Monet, Sisley and Guillaumin who, with Bazille, composed the original group of Impressionists, had all been influenced in youth by the revolutionary doctrines of Corot and Courbet, and to a great extent had adopted the palette of these two men. Landscape painting at that time was almost a new development, and these four readily succumbed to its inspiration. There is little of the strictly picturesque and still less of the grandiose in the French landscape. Consequently a school which worked along the line of old conventions could not have existed in France. But when Rousseau and Diaz, striking out in a new direction, poetised the charm of the hills and forests about Fontainbleau, the painting of the out-of-doors was liberated both as to purpose and to freedom of arrangement. The object of Turner's work had been to astonish

and charm the spectator with nature's vastness and complexity. But, with the men of 1830, landscape art took on softness, introspection, stillness, solemnity. In fine, it became more intimate. Each tree and stone hid a nymph; each stream and hill, a mystery. With the Impressionists all this was changed. They had seen and admired the work of Manet. They applauded his reactions against studio lighting, and later became his personal friends. Manet was then the cynosure of all eyes in the art world of Paris, and it was only natural that he should have been the dominating figure in a sort of *cénacle* held in the Café Guerbois in the quarter of the Batignolles. Here the revolutionists of the day forgathered, and, by their uncompromising spirit, inspired one another to practical protestations against the routine of the academies. Manet's eloquence argued away the older idea of lighting as a type; and the younger men, using this negotiation as a starting point, gave birth to the methods which congealed into Impressionism.

Although Monet and Pissarro were the first to profit by Manet's teachings, there is no definite history to tell who was the first of the group to blossom into colour. However, there is little doubt that Pissarro was the man. He was a Jew with a philosophic turn of mind, and possessed more genuine intelligence than his confrères. Monet was the cleverest and the most enthusiastic, and when the new process was outlined it was he who first developed it to its ultimate consequences. Pissarro, compared with Monet, was conservative, and his practicality did not permit him so great an *élan*. His canvases beside

those of Monet's appear almost tentative, and the greys he had adopted from Corot never entirely forsook him. Both these painters went to London during the Franco-Prussian War, and we may take it for granted that the works of Turner had an enormous influence on them. They had already seen Jongkind who, despite his adherence to the sombre greys of the older men, had, five years previous, more than foreshadowed the later divisionistic technique. But in Turner they discovered not only all that Jongkind had to offer, but the additional quality of joyous and dazzling colour. After their return their palettes became rapidly cleaner.

In 1874, in an effort to bestir the public, the Impressionists held an exhibition. The excitement was all they could have desired, but it led rather to obloquy than to sales. Again and again they exposed in the hope of obtaining recognition, but not until 1888 were they successful. The average spectator did not recognise nature in their canvases. The vision was an unusual one, and bore but slight resemblance to what had gone before. But gradually things underwent a change. Friends of the Impressionists launched a campaign of proselytising. Now and then a picture was sold to a collector; formerly restaurant keepers and bricklayers had been the only buyers of their work. The popular press softened its criticisms and in many instances went so far as to defend their pictures. As a result of these numerous indications of a growing approval among connoisseurs, the public, that almost immovable mass of reactionary impulses, began to look with favour on the new works it

had so recently ridiculed. The great majority of people had cared only for such canvases as those in which the intellect might jump from one familiar object to another, recognising it wholly, comprehending its uses, but without giving thought to its meaning. Being thus interested primarily in a picture's conventionally painted details, they were opposed to any innovations which tended to obscure the actualities of delineation. Later their attitude, influenced by acts of authoritative sanction, relaxed. Instead of seeing, as formerly, only a series of raucously coloured spots in these new pictures, the public began to sense the deep reverence for nature that emanated from them. Thus has it always been the case with art: appreciation for anything newly vital lags far behind the achievement.

The true significance of Impressionism, however — like the true significance of all emotion-provoking art — remained undiscovered to the general. When the mean intelligence of mankind brings itself to bear on a work of art, it applies itself through the channels of literature, archæology, photography, botany, mineralogy and physiology. To be a popular artist a painter must be something of a professor in all these sciences. With all other considerations — such as psychology and æsthetics — he need not trouble himself. The public, even after centuries of rigorous training and constant association with art, is no nearer a comprehension of rhythmic ensembles — perfectly synthesised form in three dimensions — than it was during the Renaissance. The two major requisites to an understanding of the formal relations in momentous art are a

highly developed sensitivity and an active intelligence. An eye and a nervous system are not enough. Society as a whole may, after a long course of training and sedulous study, reach that perceptive point where it can grasp the simple æsthetic hypothesis founded on two dimensions. But such a hypothesis is but a beginning. It embraces only the rudimentary æsthetic organisations that are found in Japanese art, the works of the Byzantine masters, the primitives of France and the pictures of Botticelli, Manet and Gauguin. The form in art of this kind is, strictly speaking, not form at all. It is balance, harmonious rhythm, linear adjustment, parallelism, co-ordinated silhouette, sensitive arrangement, outline melody — in fact, whatever is possible in two dimensions. Significant form must move in depth — backward and forward, as well as from side to side. Furthermore it must imply an infinity of depth. This third (and sometimes fourth) dimension informs all truly great art.

While the Impressionists did not attain to depth in the æsthetic connotation of the word, they nevertheless went beyond mere linear balance, for by the means of a higher emotional element — light — they organised, in a superficial manner, all the objects in their canvases. There were no dissevered objects, unrelated backgrounds, no concessions to the hagiographa or other literature. What chance, therefore, had they of being understood? Their subject-matter was too abstract; their effects were too general. No line was accentuated above another. There were no modifications to achieve vastness or splendour.

Impressionism was the unadulterated reproduction of atmosphere, the smile or frown of a mood in nature. It is small wonder that the unæsthetic found it obscure: in it there was too much rapture, too much frankness, too much exultation in mere living, and too little restraint. It was the false dawn in the great modern Renaissance of colour — the most ecstatically joyful style of painting the world has ever seen. It was feminine in that it was a reflection, and its hysteria may also be attributed to this fact. The Impressionists seated themselves, free from all trammels, before the face of nature. Nature dictated: they transcribed. Nature smiled; and they, completely blent with it, smiled also. This very enthusiasm is what kept them young and held them to their initial path. To paint as they did was an intoxication, subtler and stronger than a drug and more elating than young love.

The vital history of the individual men who formed this group reduces itself to a record of their temperamental tastes in subject selection and to a statement of the degree to which each developed the new method. The individualities of the units of an experimental school are always unimportant. Temperament can dictate to the artist only two phases of variation: what he is to use in his composition, and those transcendental qualities, such as joy and sorrow, drama and comedy, which reflect the timbre of his predispositions. Rhythm, form, balance, organisation, drawing — all these æsthetic considerations spring from deeper matrices in a man's nature than do his temperamental predilections. Whether one man is intrigued

by sunlight or another by mist, mankind is, after all, so similar in externals, that one individual's slight departure from a predecessor, or his trifling deviation from a contemporary, is of little moment. The true key to a man's genius lies in his ability to organise as well as, or better than, others. The compositional figure on which he builds will alone give us the substance of his character. We are all capable of receiving sensations: we have our personal likes and dislikes for subjects, even for actions and smells. But these choices are the outgrowths of our instincts, mere habits of association. In nowise are they fundamental. They are the physiological recognition of pleasant or unpleasant impressions. Their importance is limited to the individual who experiences them. Being the results of receptivity, they have no more to do basically with the æsthetic expression of an artist whose work is pure creation, than phonograph disks with the sounds they receive. By the intelligence alone can a man be judged. Here there is order, extensive in artists like Michelangelo, partially restricted in such painters as El Greco and Giorgione, and severely limited as in the case of the Impressionists. However, it must not be implied that the intelligence alone can create. Such a contention would be preposterous; but it is true that impressions must first be consciously organised before they can be given concrete expression.

The intelligence of Pissarro was synthetic to a small extent, but not once did it exhibit signs of extended apperception. He thought clearly up to a certain point beyond which his art never went. His temperament was not an uncommon

one among Hebrews. He viewed life as a social reformer who regards the world as a sad place, but one susceptible of improvement. From this psychological standpoint he painted. His pictures depict ubiquitous greys, occasionally brightened by a stream of lurid light; sombre scenes in which the impression is one of late afternoon; peasants who seem wearied of their unceasing and thankless labours; gaunt trees which epitomise the decay of the year. His technique is not dissimilar to that of Jongkind, and his drawing is allied to the construction found in the Dutch landscapists of the early nineteenth century rather than in those of his own group. That he was the transition from Jongkind to Monet is a plausible contention; in him are found qualities of both these other painters. But he was too conscientious ever to attain to the technical heights Monet reached. If one aspires to innovation of means, graphic traits have to be sacrificed: steps must be taken in the dark. Those who cling with one hand to the old while groping toward the new can never reach their desires. Pissarro's lack of constructive genius was too evident, his timidity too great, his intelligence too literal for him ever to effectuate new plastic forms. His instincts were those of a teacher, and he displayed indubitable traits of an exalted doctrinaire. But his art, with these limitations, was able and complete. Cézanne says he learned all he knew of colour from him. This is not wholly true; but it is certain that Guillaumin and Sisley are greatly indebted to his clarity of reason.

Although Pissarro is the greater artist, Monet is the finer craftsman. He is widely credited

with the invention of divisionistic methods; but in this conclusion an inaccurate syllogism has played havoc with the facts. None of the Impressionists invented the *procédé de la tâche;* and not having invented it detracts nothing from their achievement. Liszt did not invent the pianoforte, yet he was its greatest master. The practice of crediting Frenchmen with the invention and development of methods has scant authority with which to justify itself. Poussin was an offshoot, and a weak one, of the great Titian. Watteau and Boucher come to us direct out of the corners of Rubens's pictures. Daumier and Courbet, temperamentally unrelated to the French tradition, stem from the Dutch and the Spaniards. Cézanne emanated from the Dutch and the Italians *via* Impressionism. Matisse's procedure is little more than a modification of that of the Persians and the early Italians. Cubism was imported from Spain by a Spaniard. Futurism is strictly Italian: there is not a French name among its originators. Synchromism was brought into the world by Americans. And Impressionism, which, like all these other departures, has come to be looked upon as French, is incontrovertibly of English parentage. True, there is small credit due the inventor. The man capable of employing new discoveries (as Marconi employed the principles of wireless telegraphy) is the truly important figure. But we should not confuse discovery with employment. Since Monet was French, France has a perfect right to claim the results of colour division. The honours attaching to its discovery are Turner's and Constable's.

Monet, like many great men, had little schooling. He went direct to nature, impelled by the new impetus toward landscape. His first pictures in the Impressionist manner resemble Manet's except for trivial innovations in the differentiation of shadows; but in this difference we divine the later Monet. Viewed cursorily these paintings appear to be conventional figure pieces. But they are more than that. The figures have no other significance than that which attaches to a vase or a landscape. "Facial expression," "sympathetic gestures," the "appeal" — all are absent from them. In these pictures the costume plays the hero's part. La Japonaise is representative of that treatment of subject wherein the figure is only an excuse for a pattern of colour. The modern attitude toward theme which Manet handed down is again in evidence in Monet. Its *reductio ad absurdum* was the late epidemic of illustrative pictures by such men as Whistler, Shannon, Sargent, Zuloaga and Alexander, the titles of which were derived from the flowers held in the hands of the principals, a bowl of goldfish in the background, or the colour of a lace shawl.

Monet, however, soon tired of figure pieces. His true penchant lay toward landscape. In this field he found an infinity of colour possibilities, innumerable subtleties of light gradation, and ready-to-paint arrangements as appealing as the ones he had formerly had to pose in his interiors. At first his technique was broad and radiant, much like a dispersed Manet. The large flat planes of unified colour which later were to disintegrate into a thousand touches, were laid on silhouetted forms. His boat pieces in the Cail-

WATERLOO BRIDGE MONET

lebotte collection in the Luxembourg gallery, appear, in their simplicity and breadth of treatment, like the unfinished underpainting of a Turner or a Rembrandt. Much of the bare canvas is visible; and in them one feels the presence of the experimenter. At this time the war drove Monet to London, and his exile proved a salutary one. On his return his pictures bloomed with a new brilliance, and his flat surfaces became fragmentised. Racial characteristics no doubt establish a bond between Sisley and the English landscapists, but nothing less than an active influence could have made so typical a Frenchman as Monet paint a canvas like L'Église à Varengeville in which Turner is so much in evidence. Turner is also unmistakably present in Pissarro at times, as witness Sydenham Road, but never to any great extent.

Despite his great debt to Turner, Manet and Pissarro, Monet owed even more to the Japanese. They influenced his style and his selection of subjects. From them he lifted the idea of painting a single object many times in its varied atmospheric manifestations. But where the Japanese shifted their vantage-ground with each successive picture, Monet's observation point remained stationary. His composition too, superficial as it is, is frankly Japanese. It is generally represented by a straight line which runs near the lower frame from one side to the other of the canvas, and which supports the principal objects of the work. This line slants, now up to the left, now up to the right; but seldom is it curved as in the more advanced drawings of Hiroshige or Hokusai. His kinship

to the Japanese is, after all, a natural one, for the temperaments of France and Japan are as similar as is possible between east and west. The Japanese artists presented atmospheric conditions by means of gradating large colour planes into white or dark. The consequent effects of rain, snow, wind and sun are as vivid as Monet's, but they differ from the Frenchman's in that they are concerned principally with nature's decorative possibilities. Monet adheres to graphic transcription for the purpose of presenting the dynamics of a mood-producing phase of nature. But though differing as to aims, they both reach very similar visual results. Compare, for instance, Monet's suite of Les Peupliers with Hiroshige's series of the Tokaido or with Hokusai's Views of Fuji. Many of the pictures are alike in composition and choice of subject; but the European has achieved a living light, while the Oriental has presented a more lucid and intensive vision. These differences of purposes and similarities of appearance are again discernible in Monet's Coins de Rivière and Shiubun's Setting Sun. A further proof of this Impressionist's affinities with the Japanese will be found by collating Monet's figure pieces with those of Utamaro.

There is one important point of divergence, however, between the arts of Japan and Monet's canvases. Whereas the Japanese ignored texture, Monet at all times devoted himself more or less sedulously to its portrayal. The Falaise à Étretat and The Houses of Parliament — London are examples of his freedom from a rigid system of scientific application. In both pictures the sky is drawn with broad intersecting strokes in order

to achieve transparency and vastness. The water, in the former, is painted with long curved strippings to give the wave effect, as in Courbet's La Vague; and, in the latter, ripples are formed by minute touches. Monet's architecture is often built up with colour-spots as a man lays bricks; and the cliffs in the Falaise à Étretat are corrugated in exactly the same way the strata lie in nature. Later this preciosity of style disappeared, except in his treatment of slightly ruffled water. His brushing became irregular and elongated, and he applied his stroke so that it would merge into the other innumerable touches of diverse colour. His eyesight was highly trained, and after years of labour in the conscious analysis of colour planes, he was able to divide these planes unconsciously.

Monet was artistic in that he felt deeply what was before him. Henri Martin, on the other hand, who painted with independent touches in the hope of obtaining flickering sunlight, and who knew his palette fully as well as Monet, laboured mechanically. His work is more optical than emotional. He is a realist in the same sense that Roll is a realist; but both these men present only the husk of reality. Monet, to the contrary, experienced and expressed nature's ecstasy. He is like a string which vibrates to any harmony: Martin is little more than an eye. Both finished their work in the open; and both stippled. But here the parallelism ends, for where Monet completed the effects of the Japanese, Martin only took light into the academies. Perhaps this is why Martin was at once acclaimed by the public, and why Monet, during those first dark

years of struggle and poverty, was compelled to sell his canvases for practically nothing. Duret confesses to having obtained one for eighty francs. Martin was early accorded academic honours, and received numerous government orders.

Monet found himself at home wherever there was light and water. His canvases describe scenes from all over Europe. But his most famous pictures are his two series, Les Meules and Les Nymphéas. In the first, a single haystack is set forth in a diversity of illuminations and seasons; and the second repeats a small pond of water-lilies, in shade and in sun, ruffled and calm. His La Cathédrale, Venice and London series are also widely known. These represent acute observation and an implacable inspiration to work, for they had to be finished simultaneously. Their accomplishment was a stupendous *tour de force*. At sunrise Monet would go forth with twenty blank canvases so that the changes of sunlight and mist might be caught from hour to hour. They seem infantile to us today — these imitations of the subtleties of light, these meteorological histories of haystacks and lilies, these atmospheric personalities of cathedrals and canals. Yet it is by just such self-burials in data that one exhausts the æsthetic possibilities of nature's actualities. And not until this probing to the bottom has been accomplished does the artist possess that complete knowledge which impels him to push forward to something newer and more vital.

Sisley was the last of the original five to adopt Impressionistic methods. He had long had an admiration for the exploits of the more revolu-

tionary painters, but a comfortable income had acted as a sedative on his ambitions. He did not feel the necessity for difficult endeavour. But when, at the death of his father, he found himself penniless and with a family to care for, he joined the ranks of Pissarro, Monet, Guillaumin and Bazille. He had talent and an accurate eye, and his earlier academic work, done in the sixties, served as a practical foundation. After he had adopted the more modern technique of Pissarro and Monet, he was prepared for the achievement of new art. If we had no other proof that Impressionism at its inception was a shallow craft, Sisley's immediate mastery of it would be conclusive, for his appropriation of its means was not an æsthetic impulse but a financial expedient. But more extensive corroboration can be found in a score of academies where Impressionism is taught and taught conclusively.

There is no more or less actual composition in Sisley than in other of the Impressionists. He supplied no innovations, and he differed from his fellows only in so far as his temperament indicated variation. In Monet and Guillaumin there is a concentration and precision which the Englishman fell short of. His nature was less akin to these Impressionists than to the Turner of wide and open skies, of the softness and dreaminess of summer, of that perfect satisfaction which is content with inaction. Sisley's very colour preference for which the public reproached him — light lilac — indicates his penchant for prettiness and repose. His choice of theme was invariably dictated by a poetical and sentimental need for the intimate.

In Guillaumin we have a man who gave promise of good work but who, up to the last, failed in its fulfilment. Indubitably talented, he never succeeded in reaching that point where talent is only a means to an end. But nevertheless there was in him a solidity of modelling, a real feeling for the ponderous hardness of hills and plains. He was a friend of Cézanne, and undoubtedly learned much from that master of form. At first he had painted in sombre tones, but later, after meeting Cézanne and Pissarro in the *Académie Suisse*, he adopted their lighter and more joyous colour schemes. There is a canvas in the Caillebotte Collection in the Luxembourg which, in its broadness of treatment and extensive planes, suggests Gauguin both as to gamut and conception. Guillaumin was the most masculine talent of the early Impressionist group. He cared less for the transient views of nature than for its eternal aspect. His colour, by its liberality of application, counts more forcibly than that of Pissarro, Monet or Sisley. His contributions to the new idea, however, were comparatively small. He was not an explorer, but followed diligently in the path others had marked out. Only after he had won a fortune in a lottery did he break away from his environment. But this release came to him too late. His formative period of development had passed, and his work, from that time on, did not alter in technique. Only in his picturesque and bizarre subject-matter is noticeable any deviation from his habitual routine.

The individual achievements of the Impressionists, however, no matter how competent, are of minor importance. Impressionism was a new weapon in

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the hands of art's anarchists. It has come to be regarded as a faultless faith whose devotees can do no wrong. There has been little or no adequate literature devoted to its exposition, its causes and influence; and the exaggeration of its attainments are as grotesque as the calumny with which it was at first received. It was not an ultimate and isolated movement, but a simple and wholly natural offshoot in the evolution of new means. The artists who fathered it were, except in one instance, men whose enthusiasm outstripped their abilities as composers. Their greatest good lay in that they turned the thoughts of painters toward colour, and outlined, summarily to be sure, the uses to which this new and highly intense element might be put. They expressed just what their desires permitted them: — nature in all its visible changes. Those exquisite moments of full sunlight on land and water, of cloud shadows over the hills, of the warm brilliancy of a blue sky on the upturned faces of flowers; the stillness of summer amid the woods; the cold serenity of snow-clad fields — all were seen and captured and immortalised by these men. They were the greatest painters of effects the world has ever known. They never strove to evoke the sensation of weight in the objects they painted; and that organisation of parts, which is a replica of the cosmos, they were too busy to attempt. Their very deficiencies were what permitted them so complete a vision of the only side of realism which still remained for painting to investigate.

The Impressionists did not embody concretely the teachings of their forerunners, but used them

all in the abstract. Delacroix had sacrificed photographic truth in drawing in order to present a more intense impression of truth. Daumier had built form as nature builds it, colour aside. Courbet had turned painters from the poetic contemplation of a great past to the life about them. Manet had made images of whatever was at hand for the pure love of painting. The Impressionists turned to the things nearest them, paid scant heed to scholastic drawing, translated Daumier's doctrine of form into light, and like Manet painted for the joy of the work. As experimenters they were valuable; but their pictures, to those unsentimental persons whose appreciations of art are wholly æsthetic, mean little more than records of how a cabbage patch appears at sunrise, a lily pond at midday, or a country lane at twilight. The Impressionists did not amalgamate and express the dreams of their forerunners. They were one of those transitional generations whose vitality is spent in a stupendous endeavour to conceive before the time is ripe. The need for a great birth had not yet made itself felt; for only when the period of embryo is complete can great art be born. Renoir brought forth that issue; and with him evolution seems to halt a moment before plunging onward. The meagre æsthetics of the early Impressionists could not lead to the highest artistic results. Indeed, their animating aims had to be abandoned before Renoir could attain to true significance.

V

AUGUSTE RENOIR

THE entire past progress of painting is condensed and expressed in each of its great men. The creation of new art cannot be accomplished overnight, any more than that of a new organism; it must stem from first impulses and be formed on the differentiations of the past. Those men who declare themselves primitives and seek to acquire the eyes and minds of the Phœnicians or Aztecs are as conscious of their inability to create new art forms as are those visionaries who live in a mythical future and try to prophesy the forms that are to come. No man is born too soon or too late. There are those who strive toward classic intellectual ideals, toward Utopian economic states, toward new orders of society: but such reformers are only the malcontents. The truly great and practical men quickly assimilate the impulses of their own epochs and push the frontiers of the mind's possibilities further into the unknown. These latter comprise the maligned vanguard of heroic thinkers who fight the battles for their weaker followers. Often, however, these followers rise to great heights, for in the world of endeavour two conspicuous types exist — the man who experiments and the man who achieves. Delacroix, Manet and the Impressionists belong to the first; Courbet and Renoir are of the second.

In Renoir's life story, as in that of Titian, Rubens and Rembrandt, we see in miniature the evolution of all the painting that preceded him — the bitter struggles with the chimeras of convention, and each slow change that came over drawing, style, colour and composition. In the end, after a life full of near defeats, strife, yearning and anxiety, we behold the great man emerge triumphantly from his broken fetters and take his place beside the masters of the past. Some painters have more arduous fights than others, for the odds against them are greater. Rubens and Delacroix seemed the pampered favourites of a high destiny: Courbet and Renoir had to cleave and chisel each step of the way through the adamant of public suspicion. The world appears incapable of recognising either an intensification or a modification of an old and accepted formula. Hence Courtois and Puget were preferred to Delacroix; Ribera and Rembrandt to Courbet; the Avignon painters to Manet; Corot, Diaz and Rousseau to the Impressionists; and Rubens and Ingres to Renoir. In all of these parallelisms, the latter had their roots in the former. They were complications and variations of their forerunners — dissimilar only in method and manner.

Renoir began to paint at an early age. The poverty of his family necessitated him to make his own living, and at the age of thirteen he was in a factory painting porcelains. Five years later he applied for work at a place given over to the decoration of transparent screens. Here his unusual facility permitted him to paint ten times as fast as his fellow decorators, and since he was paid by the piece, he soon saved enough money

to give himself an education in the art which had now become with him a conscious instinct — painting. From his earliest youth he had evinced a discontent with the slow-moving minds about him, and it was natural that he should first look upon art through the eyes of his great revolutionary contemporary, Courbet. His earliest work, of which Le Cabaret de la Mère Anthony and Diane Chasseresse are the best-known examples, reflected Courbet in both palette and conception. Even later, when Manet claimed him, he clung to his first influence. For while his work now reached out toward the substance of light to be found in La Musique aux Tuileries, it revealed at the same time all the form of the Ornans master. Le Ménage Sisley and Lise strikingly combine these two early influences.

Since humanity has emerged from the darkness of unconsciousness and the individual from the darkness of the womb, it is consistent with nature that in a man's creative development — the route of which lies between dark and dark — the use of black should be his first instinct. Renoir, like all painters of great promise, started with this negation of colour. But wherein his intellectual distinction manifested itself was his innate proclivity for the rhythm of surface lines which he alone of all his contemporaries recognised in Courbet. In Lise, painted in 1867, a year after his Diane Chasseresse, both of these early penchants are evident. Black is the keynote of his sunlight; and while in conception the canvas is akin to Manet, it is a Manet made dexterous and masterly. It contains a balance and a linear rhythm of which that painter was ignorant. Lise

is one of the few Renoirs into which the influence of Velazquez and Goya can be imagined. Even in its pyramidal form, which when used by most painters becomes a static figure, there is a movement at its apex which opens into a shape like a lily. This is brought about by the tilt of the sunshade and the continuation of the line of the sash outward in the tree trunk. By just such obvious and simple signs as these in early works, can we foretell an artist's later developments.

The next year, 1868, Renoir's work is more net, more able in its balance, more sure in its effect. Le Ménage Sisley is one of his finest early examples of how this rhythmic continuity of line obsesses a mind avid for form, colour, vitality. At first glance we see only an irregular pyramid formed by the outline of the two figures; but after a minute's study we notice that on the right the line of the skirt curves gracefully inward to the waist-line, sweeps up to the woman's neck, then begins an outward flexure, and finally disperses itself amid the tree's slanting branches in the right-hand upper corner. On the left, the outline of the man's right leg and arm and hair forms another curve which bends back the line of the opposing curve of the woman's dress, and completes the figure of the pyramid. But the first curve, the force of which is seemingly ended at the woman's waist, is continued in the outline of the light tonality which begins at the man's right elbow, curves outward to the frame, then inward, and ends on the upper frame a little to the left of the man's head. Furthermore, the volume made by the light tonality in the upper left-hand corner serves as a balance to the form of the woman's

tunic. This composition is, in all essentials, the same as in Lise, and embraces that rhythm in two dimensions which Manet did not know, and that balance of tonal form of which Manet was never capable. Manet's mind was that of the lesser Dutch and Spaniards. Renoir's was the plastic and flowing mind of the Latin races, never satisfied with angularity and immobility, but needful of the smooth progression of sequence and movement.

The recognition of the artistic necessity for linear rhythm led Renoir to search for it in others than Courbet. Among the painters by whom he might profit, Delacroix stood nearest his own time. To him Renoir turned; and it was out of him that Renoir's greatness was to grow. Delacroix's organisations appealed to him — especially the triangular one which opens at the top. His admiration for this artist's talent led him to paint in 1872 a canvas called Parisiennes Habillées en Algériennes, an ambitious essay to compete with Les Femmes d'Alger dans Leur Appartement. Intrinsically the picture was a failure, but it taught its creator more than he had heretofore learned concerning colour and drawing. In it are discernible indications of the formal unconventionalities and the chromatic brilliancies which later were to be such dominant qualities in Renoir's work. Although for two years he had used Impressionistic methods, it was through this picture that Delacroix introduced him to the Impressionists' colour. Manet had already introduced him to Ingres: and these two incidents went far toward laying the foundation for his greatness. On neither the Impressionists nor

Ingres did he build a style; but from both he learned something of far more value: — freedom from the dictates of style. Here again Delacroix had a hand, for by studying this artist's uses of Ingres's simplifications, Renoir was able to make these simplifications plastic.

Renoir's colour up to this time had been restrained by the dictates of his epoch. But with the inspiration and encouragement given him by Les Femmes d'Alger dans Leur Appartement, it burst forth with all the force of long-imprisoned energy, and drove him out of doors. In this picture he found excuse to carry colour to any extreme he desired. At once the instincts of the porcelain painter, ever latent in him, came uppermost. Delacroix, in giving him the Impressionists' freedom of colour, had brought him back to those rich and full little designs he had painted on china between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. In this early training alone lies the explanation of his later *matière* which has for so long puzzled the critics. Many attribute his colour effects to Watteau. But Renoir had developed his technique before he knew the older master. Years previous he had been intensely interested in the very material of his models. In Le Ménage Sisley, La Baigneuse au Griffon and La Femme à la Perruche is evinced the love of the connoisseur for rare and rich stuffs. Furthermore he had begun to turn his eyes toward Impressionist methods two years before he painted Les Parisiennes Habillées en Algériennes. Up to that time his brushing had been broad like Manet's or Courbet's; immediately afterward it tended toward spotting, and Monet took the upper hand.

Watteau's manner of application served only to substantiate Renoir in his choice of method.

The years from 1865 to 1876 constitute a period of Renoir's life rich in its promise of splendid things. His keen admirations and high enthusiasms made of him throughout this time a disciple. But his achievements, small as they were, were more sumptuous and effectual than either Manet's or Monet's. Their true significance, though, lay in their assurance of what was to come after he had completed that unlearning process through which all great men must pass. Only by sitting at a master's feet can one acquire the knowledge that informs one which influences should be utilised and which cast aside. One cannot learn from experience the total lessons of many men, each one of whom has given a lifetime to the study of a different side of a subject. If these men are to be surpassed their life work must be used as a starting point. Renoir began thus. He had fallen under the sway of Courbet, Manet, Delacroix and Monet; but after eleven years he had exhausted his creative interest in both their theories and their attainments. These men had expressed all that was in them. For Renoir to cling to them was to stand still. If he was to go down in history as a constructive genius and not merely as an able imitator, it was time for him to strike out alone.

He did not hesitate. The portrait of Mlle. Durand-Ruel, done in 1876, marks his transformation. In it he achieved the scintillation of light which is not linked with colour or painting, but which seems to arise, by some mysterious alchemy, from the surface of the canvas. In

this picture, and also in the Moulin de la Galette, finished in the same year, he consummated the fondest ambition of the Impressionists, namely: to make the spectator feel a picture, not as a depiction of nature's light, but as a medium from which emanates the very force of light itself. But Renoir did not stop here: to this achievement he added form and rhythm — two attributes which the Impressionists, preoccupied with objectivity, were too busy to attempt. And in addition he displayed a technique so perfect in its adaptability to any expression, that its mannerisms were completely submerged in the picture's total effect. These were the qualities which Renoir was to develop to so superlative a degree. He had begun to express form in 1870 in his Portrait de Dame. Two years later in his Delacroix adaptation he had branched out into colour. And in his very first canvases there was rhythmic balance of lines. In 1876 all these tendencies coalesced. In consequence Renoir blossomed forth free from aggressive influences, knowing his own limitations and possibilities. This cannot be said even of those excellent works, La Loge, La Danseuse and La Fillette Attentive, done the two preceding years. It is only by contemplating such pictures as the portrait of Mlle. Durand-Ruel, La Chevelure and La Source that we can perceive the path along which his development was to take place. For these canvases, though far more significant than the works of Pissarro and Monet, are almost negligible beside his later work. He was a man never satisfied with results, no matter how exalted. His every new achievement was only

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a higher elevation from which his horizon ever receded.

One of Renoir's important advances in method is his liberation from the circumscribed use of black. Although in some of his work of 1876 there are still traces of that tone used organically, they are so slight that they may be disregarded. Black was the very keynote of the paintings of his day. It was looked upon as a necessity in the creation of volumes. Courbet did little without it, and Manet brightened it only with occasional flashes of colour. Today we know that it is not a technical necessity, that pure colours, in fact, when properly used, can produce the most solid forms. But whereas we have been able to profit by the teachings of Cézanne and the Synchromists, Renoir had to learn this fact by bitter experiments in a new element. In La Balançoire, done in the same year as the Moulin de la Galette and now hanging with that picture in the Luxembourg, black is entirely absent. This little canvas was probably an experiment actuated by Monet, for never afterward did he on principle lay black aside. While he realised its unimportance as a fundamental for constructing volume, he nevertheless felt its need as a complement to colour — the need of the static and the dead to accentuate the plastic and alive.

It is during this period that critics are prone to see Gainsborough in Renoir. But their reasons for such a comparison are superficial, and go no further than the fact that both painters dealt with feminine themes in a similarly intimate manner. No genuinely artistic likeness can be found between Mrs. Siddons, for instance, and

the Ingénue. The one is merely a spirited portrait without composition or tactility: the other is an exquisite bit of form and colour, which we feel would be as solid to the touch as it appears to the eye. If we are to compare Renoir to English painters at all, let us designate Hogarth and Romney, both of whom are better artists and more deserving of respectful consideration than Gainsborough. However, even these two men are distinctly inadequate as measures for Renoir. In the graphic arts Englishmen exhibit no feeling for rhythm. Indeed, it may correctly be said they possess no graphic arts. Rhythm is a factor which has made itself felt only in their poetry, and here it can hardly be called more than a division of interval, or tempo. Rossetti in his paintings is seemingly more conscious of its power than any other Englishman, and occasionally attempted to produce it by the primitive device of curved lines. But, after all, Rossetti was Italian. On the whole Renoir and the English artists are too fundamentally dissimilar to be estimated relatively. The finest qualities of Renoir's art grew out of his instinct for fluent movement, for intense undulations, for hot gorgeous colour, for freedom from all traditional prescriptions.

The evolution of these instincts was by no means a mechanical one. After he had amalgamated the leading qualities of his art, his interest would often reveal itself more strongly in one direction than another. Thus many of his canvases show a retrogression toward emphasis of light; others toward form; still others toward linear rhythm. Yet no matter which one of these

qualities predominated, the others also remained intact. More importance, however, attached to his preoccupation with the treatment of light. His experiments and consequent development in this field are of initial significance in judging his later work. In 1878 he had evidently foreseen the cul-de-sac into which the natural distribution of light would lead. The very volatility and translucency of illumination and its matter-dispelling qualities, constituted the greatest drawback to its use in the creation of form. In other words its sheer beauty nullified the deeper aims of painting. In two decorative Panneaux of reclining nudes, done in the same year, Renoir makes his first attempt to escape from the naturalism of light. The use of light is here restricted to a colour force which serves only to bring form into relief. From that time on, although he had many struggles with its power over him, he had conquered its insidious influence. It became his servant, whereas before it had been his master. In his earlier canvases, wherein sunlight had played a leading part, he had placed the sun patches, gleaming and vibrant, wherever they naturally fell. After 1878 he began placing them arbitrarily on points where formal projection was needed.

The subtle manner in which he constructed and posed these patches precluded any discovery of his reasons for altering their natural location. But Renoir was not fully satisfied, and soon abandoned this phase of *pleinairisme*. Later the spots of sunlight appeared on cheeks, shoulders, knees, or any other salients which called for powerful relief, thereby losing their flat and de-

tached appearance. This moulding of them into intense aggregations had much to do with Renoir's fullness of form. His long experience had given him a complete knowledge of their naturalistic effect. He knew it was impossible to make them remain on the same plane with the surrounding shadow, and he understood the reasons for this phenomenon. It was not therefore remarkable that, in his later method of applying them, he was sure of his results. As soon as he realised that sunlight dispersed matter by obscuring some points and accentuating others, he knew that by an intelligent employment of this factor of luminosity he could at will accentuate certain parts of his canvas and obscure others. This knowledge led him naturally to create his own light, irrespective of how it actually existed. This was an important step toward its complete abrogation, and brought arbitrary means in painting just so much nearer. He had already distorted volumes for purposes of organisation in the same manner that he now distorted light. Indeed every great painter has taken this liberty with form; but each one has to learn the device anew in its relation to his own separate vision.

There are few shadows, as such, in Renoir. We find darks and lights in scintillating succession, but we may search in vain, even in his canvases of 1878 or 1879, for those shadowed outlines which are the result of light. If light there is, it is only the light which springs from our own eyes — light which seems to come from the direction of the beholder, like the reflection of a light in water. Move as you will before his pictures, it follows you, for it is the illumination

of that part of the picture nearest the eyes of the painter. Where a form is full, there Renoir contrives to have a light fall. This artifice may strike us today as childish, since we have outgrown our concern with light; but let us remember that from the beginning the depiction of lights and shadows had been a fixed practice, and that their tones had formed the only basis for chiaroscuro. With the Impressionists light became the *atout* of painting. Renoir made of it a vital form-creating element. Herein we have its evolution: first, a convention; next, an obsession; last, a utility. So were the æsthetic possibilities of light exhausted, just as the æsthetic possibilities of the human form were exhausted by Michelangelo.

In this last step of liberating light from convention, Renoir approached nearer to nature than any antecedent painter. After all, a human being in the sunlight appears to us as a solid moving mass. Only those who look upon nature as a flat pattern of shades and lights are misled by sun patches. So, in Renoir's adapting the source of light for the purpose of producing solidity of form, we are cognisant of the palpability of his figures whether they are in light or shadow, or both. Thus he created the actual impression of volume we all get before a moving form. This arbitrary disposition of light and shadow also gave fullness and intensity to his form, and accentuated the poise, so subtle and unexpected, we feel in even his slightest works. But while this was the secret of his attainment of volume, the compositional use to which he put this volume requires another explanation — one

which has its roots in the very depths of the man's genius. There had never been such form in the French school as that which Renoir gave it in 1880. The Tête de Jeune Fille and Les Enfants en Rose et Bleu, done about this time, must have been the despair of even the sculptors of his day. And these were but the beginning. Many phases of his art were yet to be emphasised and developed before the Renoir we know today was to be perfected.

It was in 1884 that he began to "*apprendre le dessin.*" For four years he continued this self-training in the precision of draughtsmanship. As a boy he had begun his painting in a manner more competent than the most advanced style of the average artist, as is evidenced by the able use of colour as design in his early porcelains. And although he was driven to this work by necessity, the incident was a salutary one. It turned his thoughts toward those abstract organisations of colour which always afterward haunted him. Later he learned all the tricks of the day in the school of the realists, and succeeded in surpassing his masters. Next he studied the Impressionists and went beyond them also. Then he co-ordinated his knowledge and established his individual greatness. This period of his development gave France much of its finest painting, and his Baigneuse done at this time is an undoubted masterpiece. His reversion to the rudiments of drawing was the result of a burning desire to develop rhythm and form. His technical difficulties had been conquered at an early date: he needed only dexterity in drawing to achieve his end. Not only did Renoir attain to his objective,

but, by comprehending the principle of the placements and displacements of volumes, he learned the advantages of line accentuation in obtaining movement.

We now come to those pictures which show Renoir's intimate relation to Rubens through Boucher and Watteau: to his alfresco bathing figures. Some one has pointed out that his Baigneuses of 1885, one year after he had devoted himself to drawing, was inspired by Girardon's lead-reliefs in the gardens at Versailles. The commentary is undoubtedly true; but even so, of what significance is it? Aside from the superficial fact that in the works of both appear bathing women in more or less abandoned poses, Renoir had nothing in common with the school of Largillière, Pater, Fragonard, Le Moyne, Santerre and Girardon. In all such observations one senses the restriction of the critic's viewpoint to illustration. An artist may find inspiration in any visual form, but this form is of no more æsthetic importance to him than a photograph. In Picasso's paintings of violin fragments we are scarcely permitted to deduce an inspiration from Stradivarius. Grotesque as this analogy may seem, it is applicable to the contention that Renoir stemmed from Girardon. For there is nothing whatever in Renoir's bathing girls to suggest a psychological parallel between them and the leaden frieze at Versailles. If Renoir saw in that frieze an attractive pose, it was with an eye to its adaptability to composition. In Girardon there is only a pretty and sensual chaos. In Renoir we have a masterly organisation wherein the actual positions of the young women are not

even remarked. Compare, for instance, Girardon's version of the figure of the girl throwing water on her playmates, with the corresponding figure in Renoir's drawing. The body of the former is without doubt a more faithful replica of its model; in Renoir it has become impossibly elongated and voluminous. Its head is too small; its back too long; its hips are too large — and yet withal it is an exquisite bit of rich form which has as concrete a tangibility as that of a real body. One cannot judge it by its contour; one must bury oneself in its very weight.

Had Renoir advanced no further than his masterly Baigneuse of 1884, he would nevertheless have gone down in history as a great artist. But compared with the same subject done in 1888, it appears stiff. We feel in it the rigidity of a master whose great qualities are without a directing intelligence. In the later canvas, Renoir is less preoccupied with details. As a result there is a greater plenitude of bulging form, a purer rhythm. And there is also an added movement caused by the linear harmony of the background, by the hair over the shoulder, and above all by the turning of the head so that its weight is shifted over a hollow. An apparently simple thing — this turning of a head. Yet Michelangelo's genius, as well as that of all great artists, is dependent on the knowledge of when a head should be turned or a limb advanced. This knowledge is what transforms action into movement, tempo into rhythm, the static into the plastic, the dead into the living. It is the final penetration into composition; on it all æsthetic form is built. Renoir acquired it in his

period of so-called dry drawing. Its dawn came in La Natte and Mère et Enfant. It was still developing in the Baigneuse; and in La Baigneuse Brune and Nu à l'Étoffe Vert et Jaune, both done after 1900, this knowledge was becoming sure of itself. Between 1884 and 1892, however, Renoir's new strength was not wholly mastered. There was conscious effort in its employment. This is seen in La Fillette à la Gerbe and Les Filles de Catulle Mendès and in that otherwise miraculous canvas, Au Piano. In Le Croquet, 1892, he begins to exhibit, in his use of new means, the same prodigious adroitness he displayed in his earlier and slighter works. And in Les Deux Sœurs the effects of labour entirely vanish, and he once more paints with magistral unconcern.

From that time forward Renoir's complete genius was but a matter of evolution. And here let it be remembered that his transcendent competency was the result of academic training, for of late we have heard many objections to this kind of discipline. We have been invited to behold the water-colour and crayon works of the untutored, assured that they were as fine as Matisse's drawings. And we have been asked to accept, as a corollary, the statement that all painters are better off without the pernicious influence of schools. We have had modern paintings pointed out to us as examples of what inspiration and freedom from convention can do. We have heard the constantly reiterated assertion that academies cramp genius, restrict vision and force all expression into stipulated moulds. To concede to these extravagant assertions would be to ignore the history of great painting, for during all the

significant epochs of art the school was at its zenith. Without it there could be no genuine achievement. No amount of mere inspiration has ever enabled an artist to paint an eminent canvas. No amount of uncontrolled emotionalism has ever permitted one to make an æsthetically moving work of art. No untrained man, no matter how high his natural gifts, has yet been able to record adequately his feelings. All the records of past accomplishment go to show that no person who has not been profoundly educated in the purely objective (not utilitarian) forms, and in the abstract qualities of painting, such as anatomy and technique, has succeeded in conceiving an artistic organisation.

The school has never obscured or dwarfed genius, nor is it probable it ever will. To the contrary it assists the truly great man in his self-fulfilment and weeds out the mediocre man. It turns the student's thoughts to methods rather than to inspiration. It directs the attention of incompetent and merely talented persons, incapable of rising above its teachings, into side issues. Thus it relegates their work to the *soupentes* of the world: whereas, if they had been permitted to labour at random, they would only have choked the market of genuinely æsthetic production. The school teaches discipline, precision, and the control of wayward impulses, without all of which the greatest artist could only incompletely express himself. These are the things which Renoir felt he lacked; and in the midst of his career he halted long enough to acquire them. It may be argued that his was intelligent training, while that of the schools is unintelligent.

But all discipline is beneficial to the artist. Only slavish minds, hopeless from the first, succumb to it. The fact that a man capitulates to academic training attests to an incompetency so great that, under no circumstances, however favorable, could it have arisen to a point capable of producing great art. Giotto, El Greco and Rubens passed through rigid training and rose above it. And the apprenticeship demanded of the old Egyptian, Chinese and Greek artists was longer and more tedious than any of our school courses today.

Renoir's scholastic training was his salvation. With the advent of the twentieth century he struck his pace. All his qualities converged toward the construction of rhythm. In 1900 he painted a large and ambitious canvas of an attired maid combing a nude's hair, La Toilette de la Baigneuse, which is more extended and conclusive than any of his previous works. The forms lean in opposition and complete each other. In them is a perfect poise which subjectively evokes an emotion of movement. Even the lights and darks are separated so as to give the strongest effect. The very hat and tree trunk are integral parts of the whole, and there is not a line in the picture which does not develop logically to a harmonic completion. The luscious plenitude of form is equalled only by the finality of the rhythm.

Another picture of the same period is the Baigneuses in the Vollard collection, a duplicate of his Baigneuses of fifteen years before. Now all the hardness is gone from the contours. The differentiation of texture between the flesh and water and foliage is absent. The lines are less

angular and true, and both the distant nudes' attitudes are changed. The first canvas recalled Ingres; but the second brings up Cézanne, for it is pure composition with every nugatory quality eliminated. It demonstrates the possibility of creating abstract unity in three dimensions with the objective reality at hand. The picture contains movement in the vital sense, and possesses a tactility as great as a Giorgione done with modern means. In fact, comparison of these two Baigneuses will straightway divulge the advantages that lie in modern methods. The first is extremely able, and has the unfinished foundation of a great composition. The second, because of what Renoir had learned of freedom, is as intense as a Rubens in that painter's own manner; and in addition it has an emotional element to which the Antwerp master never attained.

Two years later this obsession to create form as an impregnable block, no matter in how many integers it might be divided, made him turn his attention to Daumier; and in Le Jardin d'Essoyes and his heads of Coco he surpasses even this master of organisation. Having assimilated this new influence Renoir added it to his own store of knowledge, and four years later painted his greatest picture, Le Petit Peintre. After this there was little more to be done in Renoir's style unless he extended his vision to greater surfaces. This he has not done. But he has added other masterpieces to the ones already mentioned. His Ode aux Fleurs (d'après Anacréon), the two decorative Panneaux of the tambourine player and the dancer, Coco et les Deux Servantes, La

BAIGNEUSES, 1885 — RENOIR

BAIGNEUSES, 1902 — RENOIR

Rose dans les Cheveux and La Femme au Miroir are all worthy of a place beside the greatest pictures of all time. In these last paintings nature's form is transcribed in a purely arbitrary manner. Many of the parts are exaggerated to create greater projection or more perfect proportion in relation to the whole. Texture has developed into a unified surface, and simple linear balance has become poise in depth. The colouring has grown so subtle that it is impossible in many places to tell just what it is, for in it is a whole spectrum that makes it living.

Renoir was a man who fundamentally was not revolutionary, an artist who was shown the way by others, a genius who culminated a great and febrile epoch. His beginnings were imitative of the painters of his day. He climbed the ladder from dark to light, from the stiff to the mobile. His first works under Courbet and Manet were no better than those of Hankwan. Later his pictures began to flow rhythmically in simple lines as in the Head of a Chinese Lady by Ririomin. Then they began to extend into depth, and as early as 1881 they surpassed Titian. From then on they approached steadily to the completeness of a modernised Rubens. That Renoir never reached that master's greatness is due, not to his lack of acute and complete vision, but to his restriction of it to small works. A composer who writes a symphony in which each minute part is an intimate factor of the whole, is greater than he who writes only an overture whose entirety is no greater than one of the symphony's movements. Renoir, in so far as he went, was as great as the greatest.

One cannot think of a Renoir canvas merely as a painting. It is a new and visually complete cosmos. In looking at his work the intelligence enters a world in which every form has interest, every line completion, every space a plasticity: in short, a world in which everything is visibly interrelated. A host of influences have been read into Renoir, and indeed there were many in his development. But they were only the steps by which he mounted to high achievement. So unimportant are the works of most of these other men when compared with Renoir's personal accomplishments, that one may visualise this artist as a raindrop on a window, which, as it flows downward, consumes and embodies all those in its path. Courbet, Monet, Delacroix and Manet, had they no other claim on posterity than as instructors of Renoir, would not have lived in vain. The Chinese, the Greeks, the Renaissance, even that full Indian sculpture in the Chaitya of Karli of the eleventh century B. C. — are all within him. That they are temperamental affinities rather than direct influences none can deny; but, strange as it may seem, he has traits which directly recall each one of them. They all have the ineradicable germ of genius in them; and that germ, being changeless and eternal, lies at the root of all æsthetic creation. For this reason a great man belongs to all time. He embraces all the results of the struggles which have gone before. In the possession of Renoir we have no apologies to make to antiquity, any more than in having produced Cézanne must we abase ourselves before the artists who are yet to come.

VI

PAUL CÉZANNE

THE dilettante, avid for accounts of an artist's eccentricities, will find abundant and varied material of this nature in half a hundred books written by critics of almost every nationality on that astounding and grotesque colossus, Cézanne. Perhaps no great artist in the world's history has been so wantonly libelled, maligned and ridiculed as he. Nor has there ever been a painter of such wide influence so grossly misunderstood. Cézanne has been endowed with most fantastic powers, dismissed with a *coup d'esprit* for attributes he never possessed, and canonised for qualities he would have repudiated. Like Michelangelo he has been both the admiration and the mystery of critics. And he is at once the idol and the incubus of present-day artists. His letters alone have formed the technical basis of one great modern art school. A fragmentary phrase of his mentioning geometrical figures was seized upon by a Spaniard and made the foundation for another school. His mention of Poussin drove a horde of Scandinavians, Austrians and Bohemians to a contemplation of that artist. Cézanne's very limitations have been the inspiration for an army of hardy imitators who believe it is more vital to imitate modernity than to recon-

struct the past. Indeed it may be said that all art since Impressionism is divided into two groups, one which endeavours to develop some quality or qualities in Cézanne, the other which attempts the anachronism of resuscitating the primitive art of a simple-minded antiquity. For even this latter group, Cézanne is in part responsible. Did he not say that we must become classicists again by way of nature? And did this not give reactionary and servile minds ample excuse to cling with even greater passion to a dead and rigid past? In his great sense of order his disciples saw only immobility; their minds, redundant with parallels, harked back to the Egyptians. Thus has he been emulated: but, among all these branches shot out from the mother trunk, it can be stated incontestably that only one has understood him, has penetrated beneath the surface of his canvases, has realised his true gift to the art of the future. And this one, strangely enough, is the furthest removed from imitation.

Cézanne's biography is of value to the art student, for it embodies in concrete form the factors which motivated his æsthetic apperceptions. By Cézanne's biography is meant, not the distorted interpretations of the incidents of his life, now so well known, or the superficial conclusions deduced by his biographers from hearsay; but those actions and temperamental characteristics which are impartially set down at first hand by Émile Bernard. To this chronicler we are indebted for practically all the authentic personal anecdotes of the artist. He had always admired Cézanne, and in 1904 a personal friend-

ship was established between them, which endured until the latter's death. After Cézanne had overcome parental objections and had definitely decided on an artist's career, he spent much of his time in Paris. Many influences entered into his early life. He had met Zola at school and had been intimate with him. Through him he had become acquainted with Manet, and while he appreciated Manet's friendliness, he could never understand that artist's great popularity. He preferred Courbet as a painter, and studied him sedulously. His great influence, however, came from Pissarro. For that persuasive Jew's memory he always harboured a deep respect.

Cézanne's youth, if one may call forty years a youth, was, as he himself put it, filled mostly with "literature and laziness." Not until his final renunciation of city life and his return to the south did his best work begin. At first he made friends timidly. He was a man who could not brook opposition, who was extremely sensitive to rebuffs; and those good people of provincial France were brusquely aggressive in all their beliefs and traditions. At every thought he expressed they sneered. He clashed violently and disastrously with the local celebrities who had the sanction of the established schools. In Paris he had been a frank and even garrulous companion; but at each contact with the narrow, self-centered and righteous community of Aix, he withdrew into himself. His natural spontaneity and good-fellowship turned inward, became restrained and pent-up. He grew sensitive and wary, and in later life this defensive attitude developed into abnormal irritability. To those

who could understand, however, he unburdened himself on all subjects, and his opinions were always the result of profound thought. But he never entirely divulged his methods. If questions became too pertinent, he consciously led his interrogators astray. "They think I've got a trick," he would cry, "and they want to steal it. But nobody will ever put his hooks on me (*pas un ne me mettra le grappin dessus*)." He had already suffered enough at the hands of self-seekers. He had been extravagantly ridiculed by his boyhood friends. He had been robbed and bullied by his hired architect; and having money he had been considered prey by the village widows. He permitted himself to be browbeaten because of his antipathy to any kind of friction. It is small wonder he became misanthropic.

The popular opinion of Aix was that he was crazy, and his chroniclers, almost without exception, have echoed this belief. But, to the contrary, his was the highest type of the creative mind, always in search for something better, never satisfied with present results; the type of mind which gives no thought to the acquisition or retention of property. His joy lay in his creations of the moment, but his desires were far ahead. Some one who showed him one of his early treasured canvases was ridiculed for liking "such things." Every day Cézanne watched his evolution: to him this progress was the essential thing. He left his unfinished works in the meadows, in studio corners, in the nursery. They have been found in the most out-of-the-way places. He had given large numbers of them to chance friends on the impulse of the

moment. His son cut out the windows of his masterpieces for amusement, and his servant and his wife used his canvases for stove cleaners. He saw his work put to these uses tranquilly, knowing that later he would do better, that he would "realise" more fully. His mind was too exalted to be impatient with the pettinesses of life. His great aversion was politics, and unlike Delacroix, he was above nationality. During the Franco-Prussian War he hid with a relative that he might pursue his own ideal rather than sacrifice himself for the protection of his tormentors. What did he care for France when his whole admiration was for Italy and Holland? Painting, not the preservation of nationality, was his innermost concern. In evading conscription he called down upon him the public abuse which such actions evoke. But it passed him by: he was too absorbed in his work to heed, just as later he was too engrossed to follow his mother's hearse to the funeral or to seek a market for his pictures. At every step he paused to study the rapports of line, of light, of shadow, of colour. At table, in conversation or at church, he never for a moment lost sight of his desire. One can find a parallel for this intellectually ascetic creature only in the old martyrs. He was the type that renounces all the benefits and usufructs of life in order to follow the face of a dream.

With such self-confidence no adversity could daunt him, no logic draw from him a compromise, no flourish of enthusiasm distract him from his course. Zola says of him: "He is made in one piece, stiff and hard under the hand; nothing bends him; nothing can wrench from him a

concession." This quality of character was a thing which Zola, the slave of words, could not understand. Cézanne, through much contact with letters, saw the danger of literature to the painter. "Literature," he wrote, "expresses itself through abstractions, while painting, by means of drawing and colour, makes concrete the artist's sensations and perceptions." Zola libelled him at great length in L'Œuvre. Cézanne's reply was simply that Zola had a "mediocre intelligence" and was a "detestable friend." In their youth Cézanne took the ascendency over Zola in Latin and French verse; even in his old age he could recite long passages from Virgil, Lucretius and Horace. He knew literature and was able to judge it. His criticisms of Zola are as penetrating as any that realist has called forth. His reputation for barbarism, vulgarity and ignorance has little foundation in fact. To be sure, he did not desert his work for social activities: he despised the polished and shallow wit of men like Whistler: and he bitterly attacked those painters who strove for *salon* popularity. It is therefore not incredible that the accusations against him were but the world's retaliation for having been ignored by him.

Cézanne's work from the first contained the undeniable elements of greatness. In his first, almost black-and-white still-lives, executed under the influence of Courbet (it is not tenable that they were done under Manet, as is commonly believed: they are too solidly formed for that), there is exhibited a passionate admiration for volume and for full and rich chiaroscuro. We

are conscious of the artist's gropings for those fundamentals he was finally to discover in the seclusion of his rugged country of the south. Even his early figure pieces carry this sensual delight in objectivity to a greater height than did Delacroix by whom they were inspired. And they attest to a freedom from academic principles which was not surpassed by the Impressionists. These paintings are classic in the best sense; in them is an orderliness which Manet and the Impressionists never possessed. Yet, withal, they are only the results of the literary influences from Delacroix and of his admirations for other painters. They are not purely creative, but the qualities of creation are there. To those who can read the signs, they unmistakably indicate the beginnings of a full and masterly growth.

His potentialities began to actualise with his comprehension of El Greco and the Venetians. From that period on his power for organisation steadily developed, and it was still advancing at the time of his death. But organisation touched only the compositional side of his work: it was the resultant element. His inspiration toward colour which emanated from Pissarro was what precipitated him irrevocably into painting. Colour, by presenting so many problems, claimed him entirely. To that Impressionist he owes much, not to that artist's actual achievement, but to the incentive he furnished. During his intimacy with Pissarro, Cézanne completed his assimilation of all the traits in others which were relative to himself. His beliefs and intransigencies became crystallised. The road opened

into fields where that new element of colour, which had taken on so vital a significance, led to an infinitude of emotional possibilities. Though Cézanne never completely became a defender of Pissarro's theories, he always looked upon the Impressionists as innovators whose importance as such could not be overestimated. He realised that without them he himself would not have existed, and that they had sketched out a preface to all the great art which was to come. Without them there undoubtedly would have been great artists, but he knew that a painter with the means of a Renoir is greater than one who, though equally competent in organisation, is limited in the mechanics of method. Restricted means permit only of restricted expression. The Impressionists, having made an advance in æsthetic procedure, facilitated the experimentations of Cézanne. But he in turn recognised the restrictions of the Impressionists' methods: indeed, he saw that their theories could apply only to a very circumscribed æsthetic field; and he was not content with them. He studied assiduously in the Louvre and absorbed the myriad impulses which had impelled the great masters of the past. The Louvre and Pissarro constituted his primer. From the one he got his impetus toward voluminous organisation; from the other, his impetus toward colour. From their fragmentary teachings he went on to greater achievements.

There is little or no documentary history of Cézanne's early years. Consequently his youthful admirations are not recorded in detail. But we know enough to gauge his early tastes. He travelled in Holland and Belgium, and though

he never went to Italy, he greatly admired Tintoretto and Veronese. He had a high esteem for that master of style, Luca Signorelli, who, had he not gone into architecture, might have become one of the world's great painters. In his studio Cézanne kept a water-colour by Delacroix — hung face to the wall that it might not fade, and beside it a lithograph by Daumier whom he regarded highly. We may be sure he fully understood the limitations of these men aside from their ambitions. To him they were points of departure rather than goals to aspire to. Both of them he surpassed early in his career. Cézanne admired also the Dutch and Flemish masters. He had an old and dilapidated book of their reproductions full of bad lithographs done by inferior craftsmen. But he overlooked all their defects in his remembrance of the originals. Here, as elsewhere, he ignored those details which to another would have militated against enjoyment. His mind was too comprehensive and analytic to be led astray by the flaws on an otherwise perfect work: it penetrated to the essentials first and remained there.

Thus it was in his work. The exact reproduction of nature in any of its manifestations never held him for a moment. He saw its eternal aspect aside from its accidental visages caused by fluctuating lights. In this he was diametrically opposed to the Impressionists who recorded only nature's temporary phases. They captured and set down its atmosphere and were satisfied. Cézanne, regarding its atmosphere as an ephemerality, portrayed the *lasting force* of light. "One is the master of one's model and above all

of one's means of expression," he wrote. "Penetrate what is before you, and persevere in expressing yourself as logically as possible." It is this penetration which separates Cézanne by an impassable gulf from those purely sensitive artists who are content with the merely physiological effects of an emotion. In the process of penetrating he became familiar with those undercurrents of causation from which has sprung the greatest art of all ages.

In a Cézanne of the later years not only is the form poised in three dimensions, but the very light also is poised. We feel in Cézanne the same completion we experience before a Rubens — that emotion of finality caused by the forms moving, swelling and grinding in an eternal order; and added to this completion of form, heightening its emotive power, is the same final organisation of illumination. The light suggests no particular time of day or night; it is not appropriated from morning or afternoon, sunlight or shadow. So delicate and perfectly balanced is this light that, with the raising or the lowering of the curtain in the room where the picture hangs, it will darken or brighten perfectly, logically, proportionately with the outer light. It lives because it is painted with the logic of nature. Whether the picture be hung in a bright sunlight or in half gloom, it is a creature of its environment. Its planes, like those of nature, advance and recede, swell and shrink. In short, they are dynamic.

If this feat of Cézanne's seems to border on metaphysics, the reason is that there has been no precedent for it in history. It was, in fact, a purely technical accomplishment based wholly

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on the most stringently empirical research. The manner in which he arrived at this achievement may not be entirely insusceptible of explanation. It has been pointed out how the Impressionists broke up surfaces into minute sensitive parts, some of which reflected or absorbed more than others. That which gives us our sensation of colour is the atomic preponderance of one of these attributes. Thus if an atom or combination of atoms reflects highly it translates itself through the retina into our brains as a high force, namely, as a yellow. If an atom absorbs more than it reflects, it takes and retains the reflective force of light, and, in discharging this limited power, produces in us the sensation of blue. Now, that point on a round object where the light is strongest is the point nearest the light. As the planes of the object curve away from the light they diminish in brilliancy. The further the plane from the point nearest the illumination, the less light it has to reflect. Consequently it will appear bluish. The Impressionists were satisfied with recording this blue of shadow merely as the complement of the light which was yellow. But Cézanne studied each degradation of tone from yellow to blue. In this study he discovered that light always graduates from warm to cold in precisely the same way; and, that, provided the model is white, each step down the tonic scale is the same on no matter what object. But this discovery was little more than a premise. He was now necessitated to solve the problem of just how much the local colour of an object modifies the natural colours of the light and shadow which reveal that object.

In all coloured objects the modifications are different, according to the laws of colour complementaries and admixtures. By keeping these laws always in mind, and by applying his discovery of the consistent gradations of the colours of light, he was able to paint in such a way that, no matter how much or how little outside light of a uniform quality fell on his canvas, the colours he had applied would, as they retreated from the most highly illuminated point on the picture, absorb a graduatingly smaller quantity of actual light, and would thus create emotional form in the same manner that nature creates visual form. Hence, the planes in a Cézanne canvas advance or recede *en masse*, retaining their relativity, as the eye excludes or receives a greater or a lesser quantity of light; and since the light never remains the same for any period of time, the planes bulge toward the spectator and retract from him with each minute variation of illumination.

In all painting prior to Cézanne, the natural variations of light distorted the objects of a picture: that is to say, the colours of external light changed the character of the applied colours, making some advance and others retreat; and because these applied colours were not put on with the exact logic of natural gradations, the proportions between them could not be maintained. Thus in one light certain objects advanced more than others, and in another light certain objects receded more than others. Their relativity was lost. Hence, not only was the picture's composition and balance altered, but the appearance of its objects belied the actual

measurements. These variations were so small that the untrained eye might not have seen them, any more than an untrained ear may not detect the slight variations of pitch in music. But to the man whose eye is trained, even to the degree that a good musician's ear is trained, pictures appear "off" in the same way that a poorly tuned piano sounds "off" to the sensitive musician. Cézanne, had he never achieved any intrinsically great art, would still be a colossal figure in painting because of this basic and momentous discovery. The Impressionists had been content with the mere discovery of light. Their theory was, not that one can enjoy the natural light of out-of-doors more than the abstract light in a canvas, but that, since every one of nature's moods is the result of degrees of illumination, these moods can only be recorded by the depiction of natural light; and therefore out-of-door light is an æsthetic means. Cézanne recognised the limitations of this theory, but considered it an admirable opening for higher achievement. He thereupon stripped the Impressionists' means of their ephemeral plasticity, and, by using the principles, and not the results, of nature's method, gave them an eternal plasticity which no great art of the future can afford to ignore, and which in time, no doubt, will lead to the creation of an entirely new art.

Although Cézanne had many times given out broad hints of his methods, his friends and critics were too busy trying to discover other less concise qualities in his work to appreciate the full significance of his occasional words. Herein lies the main reason why an untechnical onlooker

and admirer can never sound the depths of art. He is too detached, for, not having followed its logical evolution from the simplest forms to the most complex, he is unable to understand the complicated mechanism on which it is built. Critics for the most part are writers whose admiration for art has been born in front of the completed works of the great masters. Unable to comprehend them fully, they turn to a contemplation of the simple and naïf. Their process of valuation is thus reversed. Great art is as a rule too compounded for their analytical powers, and they end by imagining that the primitives and the mosaicists represent the highest and most conscious type of the creative will. What to them is incomprehensible appears of little value; and here we find the explanation for the popular theory that the test of great art is its simplicity, its *humanitas*, its obviousness. Persons who would not pretend to grasp without study the principles of modern science, still demand that art be sufficiently lucid to be comprehended at once by the untutored mind. A physician may tell them of profundities in medical experimentation, and they will accept his views as those of an expert in a science of which they are ignorant. But when an artist tells them of recondite principles in æsthetics they accuse him of an endeavour to befuddle them. The isolation of bacilli and the application of serums and antitoxins are mysteries which call for respect. The equally scientific and obscure principles of colour and form are absurd imaginings. And yet without a scientific basis art is merely an artifice — the New Thought in æsthetics. Readily com-

prehensible painting is no further advanced than readily comprehensible therapeutics.

Émile Bernard was little different from the average critic. In attributing to Cézanne his own limitations, he restricted what he might otherwise have learned. But the literalness with which he recorded the artist's sayings makes his book of paramount interest. We read for instance that Cézanne once remarked: "Here is something incontestable; I am most affirmative on this point: (An optical sensation is produced in our visual organ by what we class as light, half tone or quarter tone, each plane being represented by colour sensations. Therefore light as such does not exist for the painter.") By this he broadly hinted at an absolute relativity between the degrees of light forces — a relativity which translates itself to us as colour gradations. Again Cézanne said: "One should not say model but modulate. . . . Drawing and colour are not distinct; as one paints one draws. The more the colours harmonise [namely: follow nature's logical sequences], the more precise is the drawing." Precision in drawing to Cézanne meant among other things the ability to produce volume. Again: "When colour is richest, form is at its plenitude. In the contrasts and rapports of tones lies the secret of drawing and of modelling." In a letter he wrote: "Lines parallel to the horizon create vastness (*donnent l'étendue*), whether it be a section of nature, or if you choose, of the spectacle that the *Pater omnipotens æternus Deus* spreads before our eyes. Lines perpendicular to this horizon give depth. And since nature for us human beings exists in depth rather than sur-

facely, the painter is necessitated to introduce into light vibrations, represented by reds and yellows, a sufficient amount of blue to make the air felt."

These observations are of paramount interest because they touch on the essential principles of his *esthétique*. They are at once an explanation and a measure of his significance. Like all great truths they appear simple after we know them, or rather after we have experienced them. Daumier might have stated with certitude the same principles in relation to tone, for he always practised them qualifiedly. Though his means were limited, he employed those means as fully as his materials permitted. Cézanne, because he possessed the greater element — colour, constructed his canvases as nature presents its objects to the sight, as a unique whole. With all of the older painters drawing came first, chiaroscuro second and colour third — three distinct steps, each one conceived separately. Daumier was the first painter to approach simultaneity in execution. Ignorant of colour, he conceived his drawing and chiaroscuro together. Cézanne went a step beyond, and conceived his drawing, form and colour as one and the same, in the exact manner that these qualities, united in each natural object, present themselves to the eye. His method was the same as the mechanism of human vision. Compared with Cézanne, Monet was only fragmentary. Not only in methods did they differ but in objective as well. The Impressionists' aim was to reproduce nature's externals: Cézanne's desire was to reproduce its solidity. Both achieved their ends. Cézanne's

pictures are as impenetrable as sculpture. Every object seems hewn out of marble.

Solidity alone, however, though a high and necessary virtue of painting, is a limited quality. Unless it is made mobile it gives off the impression of rigidity. It is to painting what the rough clay is to sculpture — the dead material of art. In order for it to engender æsthetic empathy it must be organised, that is, it must be harmonised and poised in three dimensions in such a way that, should we translate our bodies into its spacial forms, we should experience its dynamism. This Cézanne did, and therein lay his claim to greatness. In his best canvases there seems no way of veering a plane, of imagining one plane changing places with another, unless every plane in the picture is shifted simultaneously. Cézanne's solidity is organised like the volumes in Michelangelo's best sculpture. Move an arm of any one of these statues, and every other part of the figure, down to the smallest muscle, must change position. Their plasticity, like Cézanne's, is perfect. There is a complete ordonnance between every minute part, and between every group of parts. Nothing can be added or taken away without changing the entire structure in all its finest details. Cézanne once said to Ambroise Vollard, a picture merchant, who had called attention to a small uncovered spot on a canvas which the artist had pronounced finished: "You will understand that if I were to put something there haphazardly, I should have to start the whole picture over from that point."

The individual solidity of Cézanne's colour

planes is due to the eternalism and absolutism of his light. But it was the other qualities which entered into his art which brought about the interdependence of the parts and evoked the sensation of unity we feel before them. One of these qualities was a perfect rapport of lines. Cézanne, better than any other painter up to his day, understood how one slanting line modifies its direction when coming in contact with another line moving from a different direction. When colour was first investigated realistically, artists saw that two pure complementary tints, when juxtaposed, tended to draw away from each other and to differentiate themselves. Therefore they set about to study the influence that one colour has upon another, assuming that lines were more static and absolute and consequently did not change at contact with other lines. Cézanne recognised the fallacy of this assumption, and wrote: "I see the planes criss-crossing and overlapping, and sometimes the lines seem to fall." He realised that the laws governing the opposition of line are most important in the production of the emotion of movement. In all the old painters this emotion was engendered by just such devices, but with them the laws were only dimly suspected — instincts rather than applied science. In contemplating their work we seem torn by some physical impulse to follow one line, but cannot, because the lure of the other line is equally great.

To the man of sensitive and trained eyesight this physical emotion is incited also by nature, only nature is more complex than art and is without æsthetic finality. Thus in regarding the

rapports of two lines in nature, one leaning to the right and one to the left, the highly sensitive person feels unrest and strife, and subconsciously produces order and calm by imagining a third line which harmonises the original two. Cézanne looked upon nature with perhaps the most delicate and perceptive eye a painter has ever possessed, and his vision became a theatre for the violent struggles of some one line against terrible odds, for the warring clashes of inharmonious colours. He saw in objective nature a chaos of disorganised movement, and he set himself the task of putting it in order. In studying the variations and qualifications of linear directions in his model, he discovered another method of accentuating the feeling of dynamism in his canvases. He stated lines, not in their static character, but in their average of fluctuation. We know that all straight lines are influenced by their surroundings, that they appear bent or curved when related to other lines. The extent to which a line is thus optically bent is its extreme of fluctuability. Cézanne determined this extreme in all of his lines, and by transcribing them midway between their actual and optical states, achieved at once their normality and their extreme abnormality. The character, direction and curve of all lines in a canvas change with every shifting of the point of visual contact. Since the unity of a picture is different from every focus, all the lines consequently assume a slightly different direction every time our eye shifts from one spot to another. Cézanne, by recording the mean of linear changeability, facilitated and hastened this vicissitude of mutation.

Another contribution he made to painting was his application of the stereoscopic function of the eye to all models by means of colour. From the earliest art to Cézanne, objects have been portrayed as if conceived *in vacuo*, with absolute and delimited contours. Such portrayals are directly opposed to our normal vision, for whenever we focus our sight on any natural object whatever, each eye records a different perspective representation of that object; there is a distinct binocular parallax. Certain parts are seen by one eye which are invisible to the other. But these two visual impressions are perceived simultaneously, combined in one image; that is to say: the optic axes converge at such an angle that both the right and left monocular impressions are superimposed. The single impression thus produced is one of perspective and relief. This is a rudimentary law of optics, but on it our accuracy of vision has always depended. In the lenticular stereoscope the eye-glasses are marginal portions of the same convex lens, which, when set edge to edge, deflect the rays from the picture so as to strike the eyes as if coming from an intermediate point. By this bending of the rays the two pictures become one impression, and present the appearance of solid forms as in nature. The problem of how to transcribe on a flat surface in a single picture the effect later produced by a stereoscope with two pictures, has confronted painters for hundreds of years. Leonardo da Vinci in his Trattato della Pittura recorded the fact that our vision encompasses to a slight degree everything that passes before it; that we see around all objects; and that this encircling

sight gives us the sensation of rotundity. But neither he, nor any artist up to Cézanne, was able to make æsthetic use of the fact. The vision of all older painting (although by the use of line and composition it became plastic because used as a detail) was the vision of the man with one eye, for a one-eyed man sees nature as a flat plane: only by association of the relative size of objects is he capable of judging depth. Cézanne saw the impossibility of producing a double vision by geometric rules, and approached the problem from another direction. By understanding the functioning elements of colour in their relation to texture and space, he was able to paint forms in such a way that each colour he applied took its relative position in space and held each part of an object stationary at any required distance from the eye. As a result of his method we can judge the depth and sense the solidity of his pictures the same as we do in nature.

Cézanne was ever attempting to solve the problem of the dynamics of vision. An analysis of his pictures often reveals a uniform leaning of lines — a tendency of all the objects to precipitate themselves upon a certain spot, like the minute flotsam on a surface of water being sucked through a drain-hole. We find an explanation for this convergence in one of his letters. He says: "In studying nature closely, you will observe that it becomes concentric. I mean that on an orange, an apple, a ball or a head there is a culminating point; and this point, despite the strong effects of light and shadow which are colour sensations, is always the nearest to our

eye. The edges of objects retreat toward a centre which is situated on our horizon." It is small wonder that Cézanne, obsessed with the idea of form and depth, should have had little admiration for his contemporaries, Van Gogh and Gauguin, both of whom were workmen in the flat. He let pass no opportunity of expressing himself on these artists who of late years have become so popular. Van Gogh was to him only another Pointillist; and he called Gauguin's work "*des images Chinoises*," adding, "I will never accept his entire lack of modelling and gradation." Does not this explain his aversion to the primitives in whom he saw but the rudiments of art? How could Cézanne, preoccupied with the most momentous problems of æsthetics, take an interest in enlarged book illuminations, when the most superficial corner of his slightest canvas had more organisation and incited a greater æsthetic emotion than all the mosaics in S. Vitale at Ravenna?

Cézanne was never attracted by the facial expressions, the manual attitudes, or the graceful poses of his models. The characteristics of materiality meant nothing to him. He was perpetually searching for something more profound, and began his art where the average painter leaves off. Realistic attributes are interesting only as decoration; they are indicative of the simplicity of man's mind; they are unable to conduce to an extended æsthetic experience. Van Gogh and Gauguin said well what they had to say, but it was so slight that it is of little interest to us today. We demand a greater stimulus than an art of two dimensions can give; our

minds instinctively extend themselves into space. So it was with Cézanne. He left no device untried which would give his work a greater depth, a more veritable solidity. He experimented in colour from this standpoint, then in line, then in optics. With the results of this research he became possessed of all the necessary factors of colossal organisation. He knew that, were these factors rightly applied, they would produce a greater sensation of weight, of force and of movement than any artist before him had succeeded in attaining.

Their application presented to Cézanne his most difficult problem. He must use his discoveries in these three fields in such a way that the very disposition of weights would produce that perfect balance of stress and repose, out of which emanates all æsthetic movement. The simplest manifestation of this balance is found in the opposition of line; but in order to complete this linear adjustment there must be an opposition of colours which, while they must function as volumes, must also accord with the character of the natural object portrayed. In short, there must be an opposition of countering weights, not perfectly balanced so as to create a dead equality, but rhythmically related so that the effect is one of swaying poise. Obviously this could not be accomplished on a flat surface, for the emotion of depth is a necessity to the recognition of equilibrium. Cézanne finally achieved this poise by a plastic distribution of volumes over and beside spacial vacancies. He mastered this basic principle of the hollow and the bump only after long and trying struggles and tedious experi-

mentations. He translated it into terms of his own intellection: to the extent that there was order within him so was he able to put order into his pictures. This vision of his was intellectual rather than optical; and M. Bernard unnecessarily tells us that, so sure was Cézanne of his justification, he placed his colours on canvas with the same absolutism he used in expressing himself verbally. His art was his thought given concrete form through the medium of nature. His painting was the result of a mental process — an intellectual conclusion after it had been weighed, added to, substracted from, modified by exterior considerations, and at last brought forth purged and clarified and as nearly complete as was his development at the time.

For this reason Cézanne resented the presence of people while he worked. To attain his ends his mind had to be concentrated on its ultimate ambition. It could support no disturbing factors. Even though he had no trick which might be copied, he once said to a friend: "I have never permitted anyone to watch me while I work. I refuse to do anything before anyone." Had he allowed spectators to stand over him he probably would have fatigued them, for his work progressed by single strokes interspersed by long periods of reflection and analysis. M. Bernard would hear him descend to the garden a score of times during the day's work, sit a moment and rush back to the studio as if some solution had presented itself to him suddenly. At other times he would walk back and forth before his picture awaiting the answer to a problem before him. It is such deliberateness in great artists

that has, curiously enough, acquired for them a reputation for esotericism. Their moments of deep contemplation and their sudden plunges into labour have been interpreted as periods of intellectual coma shot through occasionally by "divine flashes of inspiration" coming from an outside agent. The reverse is true, however. An artist retains his sentiency at all times. He necessarily works consciously, with the same intellectual labours as a scientist. A painter can no more produce a great picture unwittingly than an inventor can construct an intricate machine unwittingly. They are both labourers in the most plebeian sense.

Cézanne's hatred for facile and thoughtless workmen who continually entertain amateurs, was monumental. To him they were pupils who, by learning a few rules, were able to paint conventional pieces after the manner of thousands who had preceded him. They represented the academicians with whom every country is overrun — the suave and satisfied craftsmen who epitomise mediocrity, whose appeal is to minds steeped in pedantry and conservatism. In France they come out of the government-run Beaux-Arts school to which the incompetents of both America and England flock. Cézanne harboured a particular enmity for that school; anyone who had passed through it aroused his scorn. "With a little temperament anyone can be an academic painter," he said. "One can make pictures without being a harmonist or a colourist. It is enough to have an art sense — and even this art sense is without doubt the horror of the bourgeois. Thus the institutes, the pensions and

the honours are only made for cretins, farceurs and drolls."

In writing of Cézanne one is led to make a comparison between him and his great compatriot, Renoir, for it is almost unbelievable that one century could have produced two such radically different geniuses. Renoir, first of all, was not an innovator: he was the consummation of Impressionistic means. In Cézanne, to the contrary, we see a man dissatisfied with the greatest results of others, ever tortured by the search for something more final, more potent. "Let us not be satisfied with the formulas of our wonderful antecedents," he said many times, and he might have added, "and of our wonderful contemporaries." Renoir was the apex of an art era, while Cézanne was the first segment of a greater and vaster cycle. Renoir, by mastering his means at an early date, acquired a technical facility to which Cézanne, ever on the hunt for deeper conceptions, never attained. Renoir's genius was for linear rhythm. In the acquisition of this there entered, in varying degree, form, colour and light; but the line itself was his preoccupation. Cézanne's genius was for plastic volume out of which the rhythmic line resulted. That is: the one constructed his creations out of colour and made colour appear like form; while in the other's creations, which are the result of colour, the colour is *felt to be form*. In Renoir is *recognised* the solidity and depth of form, while in Cézanne the colour is a functional element whose dynamism gives birth to form which is *felt subjectively*. Renoir synthesises nature's forms, by grouping them in such a way that the lines move and are

POMMES SUR UNE TABLE — CÉZANNE

harmonious. Cézanne looks for the synthesis in each subject he sits before, and instead of grouping his forms arbitrarily, he penetrates to their *inherent* synthesis. This is why almost every one of his pictures is built on a different synthetic form. His penetration gave him at each essay a different vision of the organisms of a particular subject, a vision which varied as the subject varied. In Renoir movement is attained by *relating the lines:* Cézanne has produced harmony by *accentuating their differences.* In the former the lines lead smoothly and fluently into others, until they all culminate in a line which carries the movement to a finality; while in the latter we feel little of that suavity of sequence: the lines are formed by the spaces between his volumes rather than by linear continuation. Cézanne, if less pleasing, is the more powerful; and with all his lack of suavity he is the more complex and less monotonous. The extraordinary *imprévu* of his formal developments and his unique manner of stating parallels recall the symphonic works of Beethoven. The ensembles of both are made up of an infinitude of smaller forms, and both display a colossal power of absoluteness in setting forth each smallest form. Renoir's work is more on the lines of Haydn.

After Michelangelo there was no longer any new inspiration for sculpture. After Cézanne there was no longer any excuse for it. He has made us see that painting can present a more solid vision than that of any stone image. Against modern statues we can only bump our heads: in the contemplation of modern painting we can exhaust our intelligences. Cézanne is as much a

reproach to sculptors as Renoir is to those who continue to use Impressionist methods. He is the great prophet of future art, as well as the consummator of the realistic vision of his time. Both men deformed nature's objects — Renoir slightly to meet the demands of consistency in his preconceived compositions; Cézanne to a greater extent in order to make form voluminous. Some of his deformations resulted from extraneous line forces which, when coming in contact with an object's contour, made it lean to the right or left, or in some other way take on an abnormal appearance as of convexity or concavity.

M. Bernard thinks these irregularities in Cézanne the result of defective eyesight. But such an explanation is untenable. There is abundant evidence to show that, to the contrary, they are the result of a highly sensitised sight — a sight which simultaneously calls up the complementary of the thing viewed, whether it be a line, a colour or a tone. This double vision is only a dependency of the plastic mind which, instead of approaching a problem from the nearest side, throws itself automatically to the opposite side, and, by thus obtaining a double approach, arrives at a fuller comprehension. While slanting his line and distorting his volumes Cézanne was unconsciously moulding the parts to echo the organisation of the whole. In turning his pictures into block-manifestations, he strove for a result which would conduce to a profounder æsthetic pleasure than did the linear movements of Renoir. After we have enjoyed Renoir's rhythms we can lay them aside for the time as we can a very beautiful but simple melody. The force of Cézanne

strikes us like that of a vast bulk or a mountain. Contemplating his work is like coming suddenly face to face with an ordered elemental force. At first we are conscious only of a shock, but when our wonder has abated, we find ourselves studying the smaller forms which go into the picture's making. In the 1902 Baigneuses of Renoir each separate figure is a beautiful and complete form which fits into and becomes part of the general rhythm. In Cézanne the importance of parts is entirely submerged in the effect of the whole. Here is the main difference between these two great men: we enjoy each part of Renoir and are conducted by line to a completion; in Cézanne we are struck simultaneously by each interrelated part. Viewing a canvas of the latter is like going out into the blazing sunlight from the cool sombreness of a house. At first we are aware only of the force of the light, but as we gradually become accustomed to the glare, we begin to perceive separately objects which before had been only a part of the general impression. The fact that Cézanne invariably spoke of the "motif" should have given his friends a clue to his conception of composition. Before him composition had been to a great extent the formation of a simple melody of line in three dimensions, constructed by the forms of objects. It corresponded to the purely melodious in music, the opening of the theme, its sequence of phrasing and the finale. Cézanne chose a motif, and in each movement of his picture it is to be found, varied, elaborated, reversed and developed. Each part of his canvas is a beginning, yet each part, though distinct as a form, is perfectly united both with

the opening motif and with every variation of it.

In this little-understood side of Cézanne's genius lies an infinitude of possibilities. Without an ability to organise, all his knowledge is worthless to the painter. He himself could apply it, and his understanding of the exact adaptability of a form to a hollow permitted him to express his knowledge with a force his followers lack. His sensitiveness to spaces and the characters of his forms recall at times the works of Mokkei who used protuberances and hollows (namely: accidents of portraiture and landscape) to enrich and diversify form. Nature to Cézanne was not simple, and he never depicted it thus. Even in his bathing pieces, whose disproportions are deplored by many, the composition is minutely conceived, not on a simple harmonic figure, but on complicated oppositional planes. Not only are the surface forms perfectly adapted to a given space, but the directions taken by these forms are as solidly indicated and the vacancies made by them are as solidly filled in, as in a Rubens. Indeed these canvases, as block-manifestations, are nearly as perfect as the pictures of El Greco who was the greatest master of this kind of composition.

Cézanne should be numbered among the experimenters in art. With him, as with the Impressionists, the desire was to learn rather than to utilise discoveries. The painters from Courbet to Cézanne were the first to usher in an authentically realistic art mode, and they were also the first who sensed the possibilities of inanimate reality for æsthetic organisation. Others before them had regarded nature strictly *en amateur*, using

only the human body for abstract purposes. Even Michelangelo said that aside from it there was nothing worth while. These modern innovators refuted his assertion by proving the contrary, namely: by introducing order into chaotic nature. Their simple arrangements, however, would not have satisfied Michelangelo who, like all men who come at a florescence when the lessons have been learned and it remains only to apply them, demanded an arbitrary organisation which should be not only ordered but composed. Cézanne did little composing in the melodic sense of the word. He stopped at the gate of great composition which, after pointing the future way, he left for his successors to enter. His synthetic interest was limited to the eternal fugue qualities of nature. He undoubtedly saw the futility of creating polyphonic composition from lemons and napkins, but he had not found a menstruum in which the qualities of his materials would disappear. The old masters had done all that was possible with the recognisable human body; Cézanne's desires for the purification of painting kept him from attempting to improve on their medium.

Among a great scope of oil subjects one cannot say through which of them Cézanne has exerted the strongest influence. His landscapes have made as many disciples as his portraits, and his figure pieces and still-lives are universally copied. But his greatest work, his water-colours, has almost no following. In these he found his most facile and fluent expression. His method of working in oil had always been the posing of small, slightly oblong touches of colour which gave his canvases the appearance of perfect mosaics. In

his water-colour pictures these touches are placed side by side with little or no thought of their ultimate objective importance, and they become larger planes of unmixed tints juxtaposed in such a way that voluminous form results. His work in this most difficult medium has an abstract significance, for in it even the objective colouring of natural objects is unnoticeable. The colours stand by themselves; and while the aspect of Cézanne's pictures in this medium is flat and almost transparent, the subjective emotion we feel before them is greater than in his oil work. In these pictures there was no going back to retouch. They had to be visualised as a whole before they could be commenced. Each brush stroke had to be a definite and irretrievable step toward the completion of the ensemble. As we study them a slow shifting of the planes is felt: an emotional reconstruction takes place, and at length the volumes begin their turning, advancing and retreating as in his oil paintings, only here the purely æsthetic quality is unadulterated by objective reality. In these water-colours, more than in any of his other work, has he posed the question of æsthetic beauty itself. When we contemplate them, we are more than ever convinced that Cézanne was the first painter, that is, the first man to express himself entirely in the medium of his art, colour. Unfortunately these pictures are difficult of access. Only occasionally are they exposed in a group. Bernheim-Jeune has a magnificent collection of them, and it is to be hoped they will soon find their way into public museums. Eventually, when a true comprehension of this great man comes, they will supplant

his other efforts. His desires for a pure art are here expressed most intensely.

Cézanne, however, is not always able to "realise," as he put it. Even in these water-colours he did not attain his desire. He started too late in life to acquire complete mastery over his enormous means. "One must be a workman in one's art, must know one's method of realisation," he said. "One must be a painter by the very qualities of painting, by making use of the rough materials of art." He failed to gain that great facility by which supreme realisation is achieved, because the span of life accorded him was too short. He was old when his best work was begun, and like Joseph Conrad, he had passed his youth before the great ambition fired him. "Realising" to him meant the handling of his stupendous means as easily as the academicians handled their puny ones. This he could never do, and his age haunted him to the end. Many have taken him literally when he said he desired to expose in Bouguereau's *Salon*, but though he earnestly wished it, he desired to be received there as Bouguereau was: as one who had mastered his expression. "The exterior appearance is nothing," he explained. "The obstacle is that I don't realise sufficiently." In other words, he did not have great enough fluency to permit only the highest qualities of his art to be felt. In his gigantic efforts to "realise," his pictures changed colour and form many times before they were finished. His respect and admiration for inferior men like Bouguereau and Couture was due to their enviable facility in handling their means. He knew that the fundamental and unalterable

laws of organisation had been found and perfected by the old masters, and that, so long as we were human, we must build on their discoveries. "Only to realise like the Venetians!" he cried. And later: "We must again become classicists by way of nature, that is to say, by sensation. . . . I am old, and it is possible I shall die without having attained this great end." A year before his death he said: "Yes, I am too old; I have not realised, and I shall never realise now. I shall remain the primitive of the way I have discovered."

The prediction proved true, but his destiny was none the less a glorious one. Deprived of the phrenetic impulse which took him in all weathers over country roads to the "motif" from six o'clock in the morning until dark, he would never have achieved what he did. The fact of this great modern genius going to work in a hired carriage, too weak to walk, should be a lesson to those painters who are always awaiting the combination of propitious circumstances which will provide them with a perfect studio, a perfect model and a perfect desire. Cézanne, however, knew his high place in art history. Once when Balzac's Le Chef-d'Œuvre Inconnu was brought up in conversation and the name of its hero, Frenhofer, was mentioned, he arose with tears in his eyes and indicated himself with a single gesture. So sure was he of what he wanted to do that when he failed he discarded his canvases. Many of them are only half covered. He could never pad merely to fill out an arbitrary frame.

With Cézanne's death came his apotheosis. As he had predicted, thousands rushed in and

cleverly imitated his surfaces, his colour gamuts, his distortions of line. His white wooden tables and ruddy apples and twisted fruit-dishes have lately become the etiquette of sophistication. But all this is not authentic eulogy. Derain, his most ardent imitator, is as ignorant of him as Nadelmann is of the Greeks or Archipenko is of Michelangelo. And the majority of those who have written books concerning him merely echo the unintelligent commotion that goes on about his name. Cézanne's significance lies in his gifts to the painters of the future, to those in whom the creative instinct is a sacred and exalted thing, to those serious and solitary men whose insatiability makes of them explorers in new fields. To such artists Cézanne will always be the primitive of the way that they themselves will take, for there can be no genuine art of the future without his directing and guiding hand. His postulates are too solidly founded on human organisms ever to be ignored. He may be modified and developed: he can never be set aside until the primal emotions of life are changed. Only today is he beginning to be understood, and even now his claim to true greatness is questioned. But Cézanne, judged either as a theorist or as an achiever, is the preeminent figure in modern art. Renoir alone approaches his stature. Purely as a painter he is the greatest the world has produced. In the visual arts he is surpassed only by El Greco, Michelangelo and Rubens.

VII

THE NEO-IMPRESSIONISTS

THE Impressionists, although they turned their backs upon casual selectivism and branched out into analytic research, had — contrary to the generally accepted opinion — no precise and scientific method of colour application. This came later with the advent of a group of painters who have been called, in turn, Pointillists, Divisionists, Chromo-luminarists and Neo-Impressionists, but who chose to regard themselves only as the last of these four designations. And there is perhaps more logic in this nomenclature, for it is not limited technically; it contains no claim to achievement as does Chromo-luminarism; and it suggests this new school's consanguinity with the movement out of which it grew. With Delacroix's Journal, the pictures of Claude Monet and Chevreul's pioneer treatise on colour, De la Loi du Contraste Simultané des Couleurs, the Neo-Impressionists evolved a coldly scientific method of technique. By carrying a simple premise to its ultimate conclusion, regardless of everything save the exacting demands of logic, they endeavoured to heighten the emotional effect of the Impressionist vision. In this movement, as in other similar ones, can be detected the spirit

which animates the ardent visionary when he contemplates a novel method — the spirit which invites him to go to even greater extremes. In it there is as much enthusiasm as serious purpose, as much of the essence of youth as of the *arriviste*. In no instance has such a spirit led to significant results; and the Neo-Impressionists prove no exception. In looking too fixedly at means, they lost sight of their ends. Their début took place at the last concerted exhibition of the Impressionists in 1886 where the canvases of Seurat and Signac were hung beside those of Cassatt, Bracquemond, Morisot, Camille and Lucien Pissarro, Gauguin, Guillaumin, Redon, Schuffenecker, Tillot, Degas, Forain and Vignon. Here was seen for the first time the logical extension of the earlier methods of Monet and Pissarro.

Georges Seurat had once been a good student at the Beaux-Arts, but his quick, precise and questioning intelligence had saved him from falling under the professorial injunctions. Most of his studying was done in the art museums where he contemplated for long the old masters. Here he discovered that "there are analogous laws which govern line, tone, colour and composition, as much with Rubens as with Raphael, with Michelangelo as with Delacroix: rhythm, measure and contrast." (By rhythm, measure and contrast he meant curved lines, space and opposition.) Still searching for the secrets of art he studied the works of the Orient and the writings of Chevreul, Superville, Humbert, Blanc, Rood and Helmholtz. Then, by analysing Delacroix, he found substantiation for his discoveries. The result of this study was, as Signac tells us, his "judicious and

fertile theory of contrasts." From 1882 on he applied it to all his canvases. The theory in brief was to use scientifically opposed spots of colour of more or less purity. This method he might have learned direct from the first modern French master, for in that artist's Journal are discussed at length colour division; optical admixture; the dramatic unity of colour, line and subject; and the juxtaposition of complementaries for brilliancy.

Paul Signac's evolution was different. He had first been under the influence of Pissarro, Renoir, Monet and Guillaumin, and though being a zealous pupil of their methods, he knew little of their motives. It was only after he had observed the interplay and contrast of colours in nature that he sought explanation in the works of his masters, the Impressionists. Failing, he turned again to nature. In copying it, he discovered that in the gradation from one colour to another, let us say from blue to orange, the transition was always muddy and disagreeable when mixed on the palette, although if distinct spots of these two colours were juxtaposed in alternating ratio, the modulation would be smooth and clean. This observation impelled him to seek a method whereby this "passage" could be highly clarified. Consequently he completely divided the Impressionists' spots so that each individual touch remained pure and at the same time left patches of the white canvas showing for purposes of brilliancy. His next step led him to Chevreul whose theory of complementaries he committed to memory. His technical education he now deemed complete.

Seurat and Signac first met at the *Salon des Artistes Indépendants* in 1884, and their discoveries were at once mutually appropriated. Signac's colour divisions, combined with Seurat's more scholarly equilibrium of elements, formed the nucleus from which evolved the Neo-Impressionists who later repudiated Impressionism, using it only as the point from which they leapt off into a morass of set formulas. It was a laudable desire on the part of these new men, especially of Seurat, to try to snatch from a purely inspirational school its halo of mystery and to place painting methods on a sound rationalistic basis. But while they were right in believing a picture should be more than the visual accompaniment to sentiments, they should have gone deeper than the mere exterior of painting. For example, they should have tried to see in what plastic way their colour theories could be used, instead of limiting themselves to the synthetic unity of æsthetic illustration. And they should have tried to make a form-producing faculty of their light instead of introducing into it another poetic element in the shape of dramatic line. But they were more concerned with the clothes in the wardrobe of art than in its body. Their painting, as a result, was without sustaining structure.

With the Impressionists, as with all significant art movements, the desire for change and for higher emotional power came first: the method came later. With the Neo-Impressionists this order was reversed. Their canvases for this reason are less emotional than those of their forerunners. By limiting their palettes to certain pure colours they restricted their diversity of

interest. Even their aim at a scientific art has gone far of the mark because their science was in many instances faulty. By conditioning their methods on the observations of inaccurate writers they were able to progress only so far as these observations went. Chevreul is far from authoritative today: in fact there is no comprehensive scientific work on colour in existence. Tudor-Hart, the greatest of all colour scientists, has blasted many of the older accepted theories of such men as Helmholtz, Rood and Chevreul, and his experiments have shown conclusively that many of their postulates are unreliable. The Neo-Impressionists were unaware of Chevreul's errors, and their minds were too literal to enable them to make new and more advanced observations in the realm of colour. The meagre attention paid them is not due to their novelty, but to the fact that they have done nothing the Impressionists did not do better. They are like a cartridge which, having all the combustible ingredients, fails to explode because it is wet.

The Neo-Impressionists may, in refutation, point to music as a scientific art. But it must be remembered that taste brought about the construction of chords and that the mathematical explanation came later. The primitive peoples who found an æsthetic pleasure in broken-up major chords were ignorant of nodal points and the laws of vibration. The early Assyrians had a pipe of three notes, C, E and G, perfectly attuned, yet they were ignorant of the science of harmony. Taste in the arts has always come first: science follows with its interpretations. The Impressionists, through instinct, created their

marvels of light and atmosphere. Afterward the science of optics explained their efforts. Personal taste was their only criterion, and no books could have taught them their lesson, because their methods were so plastic that whatever was to them artistically consistent was right. Had they been familiar with science, it still would have remained to be applied: and it is only by the superimposition of taste that knowledge in the artist becomes pregnant. The Divisionists, by making a hard and fast code of science, enslaved themselves to the demands of theories. The functioning of their tastes was nullified. They therefore fell short of art.

In Signac's book, D'Eugène Delacroix au Néo-Impressionnisme, are explained many points of divergence between this school and that of the Impressionists. The difference of the two methods may be exemplified by describing the manner in which each approached a landscape wherein the grass and foliage were partly in shadow and partly in sunlight. In such a landscape the artist's eye records a fleeting, dimly-felt impression of red in that part of the green of the shadow which is nearest the light region. The Impressionists, satisfied with having experienced this sensation, hastened to put a touch of red on their canvas, while the actual colour in nature might have been an orange, a vermilion, or even a purple. In this haphazard choice of a red Signac detected slovenliness. He says that the shadow of any colour is always lightly tinted with the colour's complementary; that if the light is yellow-green the shadow will be touched with violet; if orange, the shadow will contain blue-green. Had the Impres-

sionists known this fact and cared to use it, says Signac, they could have made their pictures scientifically correct by posing the exact complementary of light in their shadow. And he adds that it is difficult to see in just what way this process would have harmed their work.

It is, however, not so difficult as he imagines. If, in copying nature by a strictly scientific vision as the Neo-Impressionists advocate, we closely study the light, we will discover not only that a local colour is modified by the colour of the sun's rays, but that an added suite of colours is introduced by the absorption of some of the object's particles, by the encompassing air, and by the circumjacent reflections. We may have (1) the local colour which, let us say, is green, (2) the colour of sunlight, (3) the colour caused by atmospheric conditions, (4) the reflection of sky, and (5) the reflection of the ground. Furthermore, if the object has any indentures their shadows will lower to a limited degree the whole tone of the object. At the least calculation then we have (1) green, (2) yellow-orange, (3) any colour in the cold region of the spectrum, (4) blue or violet, and (5) green, brown, Venetian red or any colour in the warm region of the spectrum: — all of which colours change and shift unceasingly, dependent on the density of the air which obscures, to a lesser or greater degree, the sun's rays and hence changes the reflection from sky and ground, thereby modifying the local colour. Thus it is impossible when copying nature even to determine the colour of its lightened parts. And if a colour premise cannot be established, it is obviously impossible to find its exact complementary.

Suppose we admit that an approximate colour can be recorded for that part of the landscape's green which is in the light, that is, the green whose complement is to be placed on the outskirts of the shadow. Let us say that this green is technically a yellow-green, since it is in the sun. Now the complement of yellow-green is not, as the Neo-Impressionists hold, violet, but red-violet or purple. But, were red-violet used in the shadow, its effect would be false, because, in order for yellow-green to call up its pure complementary, the light itself must be an intense yellow-green — so intense in fact that the local colour of the object (whatever it is) is entirely absorbed and unable to influence the light. Then, and only then, would the shadow be pure purple, for the local colour, being nullified, would not interfere with the optical sensation of complementaries. But on an object which appears yellow-green in the light, the yellow of which is the sun's rays and the green the local colour, the shadow also is modified by the local colour in the same proportion that the light is modified, only its modification is in an opposite direction; that is, the yellow of the sun's rays, in raising green to yellow-green, lowers the green of the shadow to blue-green. Therefore the shadow is not the complementary of the light colour. But in the darkest part of the shadow, which is the boundary dividing it from the light, there is a sensation of red derived from purple, purple being the complementary of the yellow-green. Thus in a blue object, though the pure complementary of the lighted part would be orange, the shadow in sunlight is merely dark blue with that fugitive sensation of red through it.

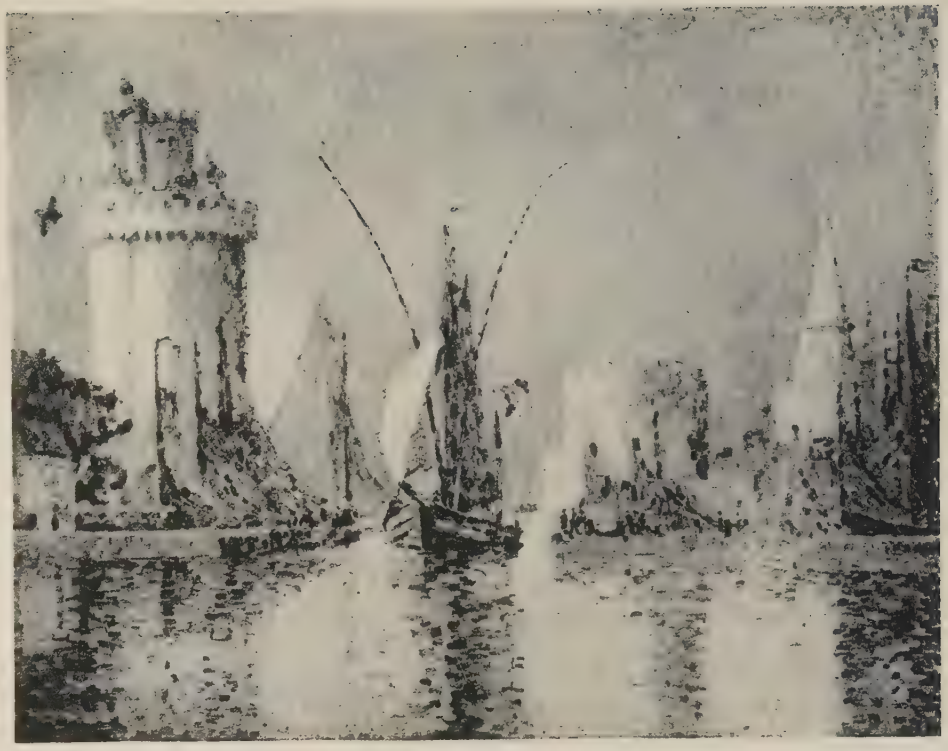
In the shadow on such an object Signac calls for pure orange, claiming that a vermilion, a lake or a purple is out of place. His colour science in the abstract may be unimpeachable, but his physics is faulty. The *sensation* caused by the complementary of the lighted part is that of a reddish tint; and so long as the painter introduces a colour into the shadow so as to give this impression of red, he is at least empirically, though not scientifically, correct. There is only a sensation of red, not a definite spot where red can be placed; and for the canvas to be truthful emotionally there must be only that sensation of red in the painted shadow. And the only way to produce it without making a spot of orange, which is a light colour and which in its pure state has no properties in common with shadow, is to use a colour which is intimately connected with shadow and which contains the elements of both light and shadow. Thus in the cold bluish-orange shadow of a blue object there must be placed a cold lake or a purple which partakes of both the light and shadow and therefore does not offend the eye by its isolation. In the bluish or blue-green shadow of a yellow-green object, a purple is too aggressive and blatant, while a blue-violet or an attenuated violet is doubly harmonious.

Indeed there is another reason why complementaries should not be used, but merely their approximations set down. Perfect complementaries neutralise each other and, when optically mixed or applied in such small particles in a pure state that at a short distance the eye cannot distinguish their limitations, produce a metallic and acid grey which is to colour harmony what noise

is to music. When C and G♭ are struck together the sensitive ear revolts in the same way a sensitive eye revolts at complementaries in colour. But while in music a minor, or diminished, fifth is displeasing, by increasing or reducing the interval a semitone, by making it, for instance, C — F or C — G, a pleasing effect can be obtained. In colour also this principle holds good. The complementary combination of red and green is harsh, but by placing red with one of the spectrum tones on either side of green a pleasurable harmony is at once established. The Impressionists through instinct generally made use of colours which primitively or softly harmonised, again proving the ascendency of taste over system, for if taste is sensitive it will be verified by science. Science, however, cannot create taste. When we consider the Neo-Impressionists' antagonistic and neutralising complementaries, it is difficult to understand their criticism of Impressionism. The Impressionists, they said, "put a little of everything everywhere, and in the resulting polychromatic tumult there were antagonistic elements: in neutralising each other, they deadened the ensemble of the picture." Now in the entire range of colour from violet to yellow there is hardly a possible dual combination which cannot be made harmonious by the addition of one or two other colours. In this process of complication lie the infinite harmonic possibilities of sound as well as of colour. There are no two notes in music which, though when struck together are jarring, cannot be drawn into a perfect chord by the introduction of certain other notes. And any two lines, no matter how inapposite, can

be æsthetically related by other lines properly placed. Even were the Neo-Impressionists, in their criticism, referring to the placing of blue in light and of yellow in shadow, they would still be open to refutation, for their predecessors, by placing on their canvases the colours they had *felt* in contemplating their models, were once more emotionally right although not exactly right from the standpoint of abstract science.

With all the brilliancy of their pure pigments the Neo-Impressionists have yet to produce a canvas as brilliant or as harmonious as those of the Impressionists. The reason is not far to seek. In an Impressionist picture there is a certain amount of neutrality caused by mixing the colour of light with that of blue shadow; and this mixture heightens the scintillation of the ensemble. The Divisionists, on the other hand, went so far as to abolish neutrality altogether. In raising all values to a point of saturation, they diminished the brilliancy of the picture as a whole. It is to be doubted seriously if even Signac is still of the belief that the Pointillists' squares of colour blend optically. Theoretically they should, but actually the impression we receive is not one of vibrant light. We see only an extended series of spots which are all about the same size — a size which was varied but little as the dimensions of the canvas varied, as was the case with the Impressionists. But these latter artists mixed their spots not only on the palette but on the canvas as well, and blent them into neighbouring spots. The result was a richly decorated surface whose minute parts do not foist themselves upon our sight. But in Signac, Cross, Van Rysselberghe,



LES TOURS VERTES À LA ROCHELLE — SIGNAC

Dubois-Pillet, Luce, Petitjean, Van de Velde or Augrand, who developed these means to their ultimate limits, these spots are so displeasing and obtrusive that it is mentally impossible to lose sight of them in the contemplation of the pictures. All of these artists produce flat work, with the possible exception of Van Rysselberghe who has merely superposed this technique on an obvious and insensitive academism. He is to the Neo-Impressionists what Henri Martin is to Monet.

There has been too much credit taken by the Neo-Impressionists for the discovery of this stippling technique. As a matter of fact it is not wholly original with them. Turner, Constable, Delacroix, Jongkind, Fantin-Latour, Cézanne and the Impressionists were all interested in breaking nature up into parts in order to arrive at a dynamic representation of the whole. The process with them was commendable, but the Chromo-luminarists carried it to such an extreme that they saw nature only in order to break it into spots. They repudiate vehemently the appellation of Pointillists, and the name that Émile Bernard gave them — Pointists — has remained beneath their notice. They point out that one may be a Pointillist without being a Divisionist, for Pointillism is the using of colour in spots so as to avoid its flat application, while "division" is the application of separated spots of pure pigment for the purpose of bringing about an optical admixture. The idea of optical admixture was born when some one placed several planes of different colours on a disc and, by revolving it rapidly, caused them to blend perfectly. Immediately the Neo-Impressionists jumped to the conclusion that

distance would accomplish the same result with any-sized spots. This assumption was their initial error. There is a very definite limit to the size of colour spots which at a distance will blend optically, and the artists of this school, with the one exception of Seurat, made their spots too large. Delacroix never juxtaposed large strips of complementaries in one plane, but applied hachures of almost the same tint. The effect would have been little different had he painted flatly, except for the richer *matière* this method produced. The Impressionists mixed their colours both on the palette and on the canvas, except when they wished to reproduce a certain texture that called for small lights and shadows placed side by side. And Cézanne modulated his colour spots so that there were no jumps or hiatuses between them.

The Neo-Impressionistic methods have no such subtleties. In applying their colour these painters keep each spot separated from its neighbour by a tiny bit of white canvas which is intended to give added light to each part. The spots are unmixed and are applied straight from the palette in preponderating proportions to obtain certain general colour impressions. They use only the seven colours of the prismatic spectrum, and in thus restricting their palette they have limited their range of greys. Since nature itself is a series of high-pitched greys in which only occasionally does a pure colour appear, they were inadequately equipped for reproducing it. If, by raising all tints to their purity, they hoped to obtain the maximum of colouration and therefore the maximum of luminosity, they overlooked the fact that to produce any light whatever there must

be negation or shadow. They failed to achieve light because they equalised the brilliancy of all colours. Even to produce colour there must be black or grey. Their equilibrium of elements led to the cold grey aspect of their work and to the acid and inharmonious effect of their colour.

The desire of the Neo-Impressionists to improve upon the Impressionistic vision was a sincere one, and in their striving for dramatic means for heightening the already intense emotional power of their forerunners' work, they showed themselves to be animated by an ambition for change and improvement without which no vital innovation can be made. Their desire was commendable, but their science was inadequate. Their modern spirit was best shown in their search for the significance of line in its harmonic relation to colour and tone. The impetus to this search emanated from Seurat who dictated to his biographer, Jules Christophe: "Art is harmony; harmony is the analogy of contraries (contrasts), the analogy of likes (gradated), of tone, of tint, of line; — tone, that is to say, the light and dark; tint, that is to say, red and its complement green, orange and blue, yellow and violet; line, that is to to say, horizonal directions. . . . The means of expression is the optical admixture of tones and tints and of their reactions (shadows) following fixed laws." Delacroix had already turned his eyes in the direction of the harmony of lines and colours. It will be recalled that he wrote in his Journal: "If to a composition, interesting in its choice of subject, you add a disposition of lines, which augments the impression, a chiaroscuro which seizes the imagination, and a colour which

is adapted to the characters, it is then a harmony, and its combinations are so adapted that they produce a unique song. . . . It is good not to let each brush stroke melt into the others; they will appear uniform at a certain distance by the sympathetic law which associates them."

The Neo-Impressionists, taking their cue from Seurat's observations, state that the first consideration of a painter before a blank canvas should be to determine what curves and what arabesques are going to divide the surface, and what colours and tones cover it. Even in this aim they went further than the Impressionists who neither ordered nor synthesised their works formally. The Neo-Impressionists say they do not commence a canvas until they have determined its complete arrangement. Then, guided by tradition and science, they harmonise the composition with their conception. That is to say, they adapt the lines, colours and tones to an order which æsthetically expresses the character of emotion their model calls up in them. They hold that horizontal lines give calm; ascending lines, joy; descending lines, sorrow; and that the intermediary lines represent the infinite variations of emotions that lie outside these first three types. But they offer no explanation of the analogies between these intermediate lines and the kinds of emotion they are supposed to call up. They go on to explain that hot tints and light tonalities should be applied to ascending lines, cold tints and sombre tonalities to descending lines, and an equal amount of light and dark to the horizontal lines. "Thus," they add, "the painter becomes a creator and a poet."

All this theorising would be important for the dramatic illustrators were it entirely true. But while a line placed horizontally may represent calm, the same line made perpendicular or laid at an angle of forty-five degrees will also produce calm. The straight line varies so little in its significance, no matter at what angle it is placed, that its direction is negligible from an emotional standpoint. The *degree of curve* in a line is its emotional element, and only when varying curves come in contact is the highest formal emotion obtained. The straight line is the lifeless, the static, the immobile. As such it can serve only as a foil to the curved line, for it is the straight that makes the curved of value. Their theory concerning hot colours and high tones is sounder than their linear theory; but in copying a joyous landscape is one not *forced* to put on high tonalities and hot colours, since it is in *seeing* these high values that we experience the sensation of joy? And is it not from the low values in nature that we receive our sensation of sorrow? One may accentuate the colours and tones, but if they are too strongly intensified they will approach the other extreme and produce dead and mournful landscapes. This accentuation the Neo-Impressionists carried to the limit permitted by their pigments. Their ideas of line and of joyous and sombre colours are undoubtedly of value if profoundly and extensively comprehended and properly applied. But, in order to become significant, line must only delimit organisation and become volume; and colour, instead of merely producing joy and sorrow, must bring about form. Then again, there is that world lying

on the further side of flatness which must be explored.

With all their theorising and attempts to obtain brilliancy, the Neo-Impressionists produce only grey work. From the first these artists were too coldly intellectual, and it matters little whether their science was right or wrong when we contemplate their pictures. Were their science perfect they could never have created art which goes beyond the arabesque and the poetry of arrangement, for they were not fundamental even in their aims. They have all painted different subjects in slightly varying manners, but, apart from Seurat's, all their canvases have these things in common: a uniform range of colour, a set method of technique, and the hard and "noisy" contrasts which in their larger works produce a veritable din. Those of the Neo-Impressionists who are still living claim to have completed Cézanne, Pissarro and Delacroix, to have perfected a method, to have expanded logically the Impressionists to something worth while, to be in accord with Rood and Chevreul, to have brought great harmony into painting, to have taken painting into the pure realms of poesy and symphonic musical composition. Alas, that their claims have no substantiation in our receptivities!

Seurat, the founder, was the only genuinely artistic man of the movement, and an early death denied him his chance to develop. Though seduced by too exacting a process, he has nevertheless given us some sensitive and delicately beautiful canvases. Le Chahut, Le Cirque and Un Dimanche à la Grande-Jatte are saturated

UN DIMANCHE À LA GRANDE-JATTE — SEURAT

with light, and in them is an undeniable order of parallel lines. His colours were never as harsh and acid as those of his confrères, and his pictures have a blond tonality which the other men of the movement entirely lack. His crayon drawings, from the standpoint of tonal experimentation, are interesting and seem almost like paintings. He had a great talent, and had he lived we might have expected great things from it. He was more vitally interested in style than in technical methods, and in his conclusions stemmed directly from Delacroix. His spottings were much smaller and more effective than those of the other Pointillists. His desire was to express an idea through the medium of nature, not to copy nature in order to relate the sensation it gave the artist. His painting was synthetic. All details and accidents of colour and silhouette he set aside as useless. His is an art of parallels and analogies, of sensitivity and analysis; in fact, it has all those qualities which, were they present in greater strength, would produce significant pictures. He was of one piece; and his development, once he had begun to paint, was an even one toward a definite goal. In him, alone of the members of the group, we find an artist and not an illustrator. Those who liken him to Aubrey Beardsley have less reason for their comparison than the ones who see parallels between Gainsborough and Renoir. Compare the quoted remarks of Seurat concerning tone, line and colour with Signac's summing up of his method, and the temperamental differences between the artist and the scientist will at once be seen. Signac says his method is "observation of the laws of colour, the exclusive use of pure tints,

the renunciation of all attenuated mixings, and the methodical equilibrium of elements."

One of the most noted followers of the Neo-Impressionistic methods was the Hollander, Vincent van Gogh. Although generally considered in critical essays as an unrelated phenomenon in the art heavens, he is closely allied to Signac and to Delacroix through Seurat. He adopted painting, one is inclined to believe, because his verbal eloquence was inadequate to bring the Belgian miners to repentance. He had studied for the ministry, but like most men who, finding themselves strictly limited in one vocation, essay another, he found himself equally limited in his second. He drifted back to Holland and began to study painting in the studio of Mauve, a relative of his by marriage. His ardent, even flamboyant, desire to do good to everyone who crossed his path needed an outlet, and he found an emotional substitute for pamphleteering in the physical and mental exertion of painting. In this work he could preach unchecked, secure from arrest. He loved Millet because Millet loved the down-trodden. He loved Delacroix because of that artist's dramatic inspiration. He loved Daumier because he imagined he saw in Daumier a satire on the beast in man. He loved Monticelli because in that Provençal he sensed a wild gypsy mind and a kindred unrestraint in the use of colour. And he loved Diaz because Diaz was a poetic woodman.

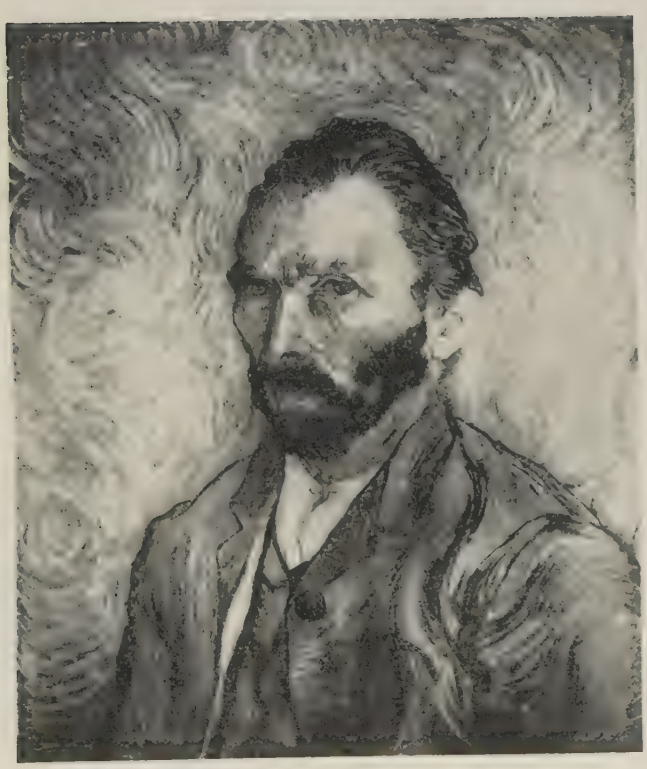
Before coming to Paris Van Gogh had studied in the Antwerp Academy, and while in the French capital he met and was influenced by Pissarro. Here he also became acquainted with Bernard

and Gauguin, adopting the Divisionistic methods from Seurat. He used only pure colours on his palette and mixed them only with white and black. Later he went to Arles where in two years, from 1887 and 1889, he painted the great bulk of his work, averaging four canvases a week through sickness, drink, insanity and disease. In him we have a perfect example of just how little can be done with pure enthusiasm unorganised by intellectual processes. His pictures display an entire lack of order, whether it be of colour, line or silhouette: there was never any form in them. His work is plainly the labour of the fanatic who, in a fury of pent-up desire to express himself, suddenly seizes a palette and brush and applies colours almost at random. Indeed, some of his pictures were completed in a few minutes. Even many of those in which the symbology had to be thought out at length, were painted in an hour.

That Van Gogh was an illustrator is undeniable; but he was an illustrator of the abstract gropings of an unbalanced mind avid for dramatic emotions, rather than of exterior nature. His landscapes seem to portend the calm before some great upheaval, or to express a supernatural energy poised for an act of total annihilation. In them there are frenzied lines running zigzag and at random, and rolling clouds of purple and lurid yellow hanging over raucously bright roofs. His portraits remain with us as memories of a feverish nightmare. They are too hollow and immaterial to appear even as a depiction of form. His colours carried out this feeling of dramatic terror, and because they were not harmonised

with either line or tone, they became all the more chaotic. He never kept to the spots that Signac and Seurat had given him. His impatience was too great; the fire burned too furiously. He elongated them into strips like straw, and they give his work the appearance of haystacks. He covered with one stroke more space than Seurat covered with twenty strokes.

This has been called his own *apport* to art. In Gauguin, however, the same stroke is used, not so heavily loaded with pure colour, to be sure, but just as long. But in Gauguin the strokes are less noticeable because they all have an analogous direction. With Van Gogh they rush wildly about, now one way, now another, sometimes covering the canvas entirely, sometimes separated to let the white show through. This separating was not done for the same reasons as in Signac, but because Van Gogh's impatience was too great to permit him to go back and cover. His figures are outlined in broad black or coloured lines, and colours are juxtaposed with their complementaries. In a Portrait d'Homme, done in 1889, the background is laid in with a bright green over which are superimposed polka-dots of pure vermilion surrounded by a darker green, the whole striped with yellow and light vermilion flourishes. On this is a yellowish face whose pompadour hair is made of black, vermilion and light violet. The collar is light green, red and blue; the striped cravat, red and white; the coat, violet and green; the shirt, pure green outlined in pure lake, with orange buttons on it; and the picture's inscription — Vincent, Arles, '89 — is signed in vermilion. In this painting



PORTRAIT DE L'ARTISTE VAN GOGH

is evidenced his impetuous method. He seemed to feel that the greater the exertion, the greater the relief from that repressed passion which egged him on to action.

Landscapes he liked, and he took pleasure in doing copies of other men. In such works there was no hard and set reality to follow as in still-lives and portraiture. Here the colour could be splashed on almost haphazardly. He himself said that still-life was a relaxation. He felt this because to paint still-life his enthusiasm was restricted. Anything served for a subject — an old boot, a single vase, a coffee-pot. One imagines he tossed these models onto a table from the opposite side of the room, and painted them in whatever position they fell. In this carelessness the public sees "inspiration." And indeed his canvases were inspired, but only in the same way a starving man is inspired to throw himself upon a sumptuous meal. He painted because he was forced to, and when painting is merely a physical necessity indulged in to express an unordered religious mania, it ceases to interest the æsthetician who searches for a complete cosmos bodied forth in subjective form.

As a decorator Van Gogh is too turbulent and forward; as a painter of easel pictures he is too chaotic and unintelligible; but as a blast of misdirected enthusiasm he is not without power. His symbolism, while not being of the variety which presents Grecian figures as abstract virtues, is nevertheless of the same order. He tells us that in painting a young man he loved, he would make the head a golden yellow and orange, and the background a rich and intense blue, as well

as transcribing the physical likeness to epitomise his love. Thus depicted the young man would be "like a bright star in the boundless infinite taking on a mysterious importance." Again he writes: "Had I had the strength to continue, I would have done saints and holy women from nature, who would have seemed to belong to another age. They would have been the bourgeois of the present, having many parallels with the old primitive Christians." We see what he was after.

Van Gogh possessed all the modern socialistic ideals. He held that individuals could do nothing alone, but should work in communities, one doing the colour, one the drawing, another the composition, etc. In his desire for this democratic art factory is seen his absence of self-confidence. It is not strange when we consider his adherence all his life to so childish a technical programme as Divisionism. This adherence marked the main difference between him and Gauguin. The latter detested the Divisionistic method. He wanted to adapt nature's colour and effect to decoration, while Van Gogh wanted to make only abstract dramatic tapestries. They both succeeded; and though the canvases of Gauguin have the peaceful utilitarian destiny of interior decoration awaiting them, Van Gogh's work, once we are rid of the modern habit of welcoming all disorganised and purely enthusiastic work as profound, will be laid aside forever. He was psychiatric and expended the greater part of his feverish energy through the channel of painting. But he did little more than use a borrowed and inharmonious palette to express ideas wholly outside the realm of art.

VIII

GAUGUIN AND THE PONT-AVEN SCHOOL

THE descriptive in art has always seduced the eye of the superficial majority. From this accidental and nugatory side of painting the public has derived all its enjoyment. The moment a depicted object is recognised, the general pleasure in the arts increases; and the moment the accepted vision of the object is modified or distorted, this pleasure decreases and in many instances ceases altogether. One school which deals with a certain class of subjects has its own admirers; while another school which treats of dissimilar subjects has a different following. Furthermore, the manner in which subjects are portrayed — realistically or impressionably, poetically or prosaically — has its individual adherents. Persons whose temperamental tastes make them antipodal to one method of transcription become enthusiastic over another, irrespective of the fact that the æsthetic merits of the different procedures are equal. Those whose criterion is prettiness are naturally attracted to Whistlerian and Cubistic modes. Idealists lean toward the symbolic and transcendental painters like Van Gogh and Redon. Hardy persons who live largely on the physical plane prefer Ribera, Franz Hals, Sorolla or Dürer. Simple sensualists admire Goya, Rubens, Bronzino, the erotic prints

of the Japanese, or the pictures of the Little Dutchmen. Biblical students choose the primitives or the painters of religious subjects. Architects like Guardi, Gentile Bellini and Canaletto. Personal tastes in life dictate tastes in art; the reason some have a wider taste than others is because their interests are larger.

The average person forms his art attachments in the same way he chooses friends. For this reason many art lovers are passionately attracted to Gauguin, while others, obsessed with the theories of modernity, are impervious to the inherent appeal he incontestably possesses. The Impressionists were enamoured of nature. Their pictures have an almost human physiognomy and are thoroughly joyous. In them one senses the abstract love of beautiful country-sides, blue distances and scintillating lights. They arouse an emotion in the popular mind because of the familiarity of their themes. Gauguin was not content with the landscapes of civilisation. He wanted something more elemental — scenes where an unspoilt and untamed nature gave birth to a race of simple and colourful character. He felt the need of harmonising his people with their *milieu*. To him it seemed inconsistent to place a fully dressed man or woman in a primitive forest or on the banks of a turbulent stream innocent of commercial traffic. There was a positive immodesty in combining a puny figure, whose body was too distorted by work to show itself unclothed, with the majestic nakedness of a primeval landscape. Millet's peasants in plowed fields and Raffaelli's clothed figures in busy streets were not incongruous; but in most of the landscapes

of Gauguin's day cultivated moderns stalked where Corot had once put nymphs and Titian, Antiopes.

Gauguin's sense of harmony in idea precluded any such irrelevancies and anachronisms. His painting was perhaps the highest and most consistent type of illustration the world has produced. Judged from this standpoint, on which it was based consciously, his art was complete. And inasmuch as he did not strive for profounder things, it is from this standpoint that he must be approached. What impetus he gave to art came out of his desire to view nature simply, like a child, at the same time equipped with all the weapons of a modern intelligence. His art consequently has not only the interest of historic reconstruction but an added interest which, in spite of our veneer of cultivation and education, we all feel at times for perfect lassitude and elemental unrestraint. No man is so intellectual that he cannot enjoy occasional recreation and a forgetfulness of mental activities. Indeed the greatest minds react so completely at times that they demand the crudest stimulants — melodrama, wild Arabian chants, romance and physical intoxication. Gauguin, appearing in the midst of gigantic and epoch-making æsthetic endeavours, embodied this spirit of reaction. It was a grave and serious world in which he found himself — the world of Cézanne, Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism. His nature was too timid and simple for him to throw himself into the whirlpool. Instinctively he sought a haven far removed from the strife about him.

In the contemplation of the canvases of this

modern savage we enter that side of the broad field of æsthetics where the whole world can escape, as for a holiday, from the stress of intellectual research, there to enjoy art simply and receptively, as one enjoys a dream of strange lands. In Gauguin there is a power which impels our interest, hunts out our instinct for the exotic and calls to the fore a romantic love of adventure and a desire for far countries. In this appeal no other painting succeeds like his — not even the Persian landscapes, the Chinese pictorial visions of heaven, or the lurid images of Gustave Moreau. In Gauguin's South Sea Island canvases are crystallised our hopes for a Utopian peace, our vague memories of an untramelled prehistoric age. Calm and sunlight, the sea and wild mountains — all are here. And we find ourselves amid a peaceful, music-loving and simple people who, we imagine, would welcome the tired traveller and gather round him with offerings of fruit and flowers as he lands on their golden beach.

Gauguin is purely an image-maker. So abstract a painter is he that his pictures are merely the point of departure from which our thoughts leap into an unlimited world of pleasurable visualising. They move us emotionally, even mentally, but never æsthetically. We feel before them exactly what we feel when reading that extraordinary and unique book of his, Noa Noa. Indeed he was more literary than artistic, and to appreciate him fully one should read first his biography written by Jean de Rotonchamp, — then Noa Noa. After that his pictures will take on a new meaning. He makes his dreams so

forceful that we too start to dream before them. His art is of the same calibre as that of Altichiero, Michelino da Bosozzo, Ortolano, the Borassa school, Manet and Degas. All these men are illustrators of a high order; all are impelled by the complete sincerity of their visions; and all are interesting because of their freedom of expression. It is a new adventure each time we see one of their works, for adventure is merely contact with the unexpected. In Gauguin this *imprévu* is not restricted to unconventionality of balance and the extraordinary arrangement of objects; but expresses itself in the actual subject-matter as well. His savages, ready to kill or love with equal unconcern, bring up to us our childhood enthusiasms for the tales of Swift, Defoe and Pierre Loti. His pictures epitomise the call of the natural, the delight in perfect freedom, the ideal of an unclothed age.

But though his work is calm and outside the world of strife and endeavour, his life was turbulent, and tortured by reiterated disappointments. Toward the end he wrote to a friend that he fell over-often, and arose only to fall again. As with the sailor new horizons ever stretched before him, and their promise of better things was never consummated. His energy was drained by a continual struggle against the forces of civilisation just as the sailor's is weakened by unceasing battles against the elements. The spot where at last he found refuge was far from his ideal. But in this ideal world he always imagined himself living, and his painting took on its colour and atmosphere. Just as he advised his followers to draw a curtain in front of their models, so he

drew the veil of imagination before his eyes and saw only what he wished to see. In this almost fanatic idealism he was undoubtedly actuated by fear of life's gross realities, for he was not content merely to live apart: he was forever attempting to ameliorate the trying conditions which arose from French misrule in the Marquesas. For his pains he was condemned to gaol and later was made an outcast. This friction with the established order, however, had to do only with Gauguin the man. Gauguin the artist remained to the end a contented and passionate dreamer.

To understand his art and its actuating impulses it is necessary to know something of his colourful and adventuresome life. Of all modern painters, he, more than any other, was reflected in his work. As a youth he had gone to sea and served a six-year apprenticeship before the mast. He next became a successful banker and to all outward appearances was satisfied with the status of a wealthy citizen. But all the time the love of change and the nostalgia for strange lands were at work within him, and though spending six days a week in an office he painted every Sunday. It was Pissarro, admired by Gauguin from the first, who persuaded him to forgo everything save his art. This he did in 1883. From that time on he became a derelict who had to seek support from his friends. Although at times he was forced to work in offices, edit papers and grow fruit, the donations from those he knew were the backbone of his resources. He had met Van Gogh in Paris in 1886, and two years later accepted the latter's invitation to visit him on the bounty of Van Gogh's brother Theodore

at Arles in the south of France. Here, where he had expected to find conditions conducive to work, his life was, according to his own accounts, in constant danger. The Dutchman, he says, attacked him often, and sometimes Gauguin, awaking with a start, would see Van Gogh stealing across the room to him with a knife. Such a life was impossible, and after a regrettable incident in which he was blamed for the amputation of Van Gogh's ear, he returned to Paris. The year before this he had made a short trip to Martinique, and while in Europe had lived at Pouldu, Copenhagen, Rouen, Pont-Aven, Concarneau and Paris. Again he went to Brittany. He wanted quiet and was ever ill at ease among the superficialities of a hypocritical civilisation. But there, while protecting a negress, he was attacked by some sailors, and his injuries forced him to return once more to Paris. The negress had preceded him, and when he arrived he discovered that she had robbed him of his entire studio equipment.

At this time, Verlaine, Moréas, Aurier, Julien Leclerc and Stuart Merril, who called themselves the symbolist poets, saw in him a comrade. In 1891 they gave a benefit performance in the Vaudeville for him and Verlaine. Maeterlinck's L'Intruse was staged for the first time, and Gauguin's share of the proceeds was enough to pay his passage to his longed-for tropics. Two years later found him back again with many canvases and a strange and grotesque costume, heavy rings on every finger, wooden shoes and a cane of his own carving. He was impatient for praise and admiration and large sales; but none of

these came to him. At a sale of his work in the Hôtel Drouot in 1895 so small a sum was realised that his friends again took pity on him, and Carrière secured him a cheap passage back to his beloved islands. His adventures in the tropics make poetic and romantic reading. His premature death, at which only one old cannibal was present, was a fitting climax to a life given over to a hopeless search for the ideal.

While still in a banker's office, and before he had met Pissarro, Gauguin had painted as an amateur; and as early as 1873 he had exposed a landscape. But when he became personally acquainted with Pissarro, who had a way of inflaming the minds of the younger and naturally revolutionary men of his day, his impulses toward art became overpowering. His early training under this violent heretic was so thorough that he never made a concession to the public or retrogressed toward scholastic formulas. Being a born painter, he quickly absorbed the ideas of the Impressionists, and exposed with them in the Rue des Pyramides in 1880 and 1881. His first canvases were wholly Impressionistic and much like Guillaumin's. Even as late as 1887, after he had known Cézanne and had become imbued with the blazing brilliancy of Martinique, Gauguin still clung to his earlier technique. His Paysage de la Martinique is one of his best-ordered works and also one of his most fluent. However, he had become dissatisfied with Impressionist precepts and had gone to Brittany to get closer to a more natural people, to a cruder and more rugged landscape. There he had seen and admired the Gothic statues, the simplicity of which appealed

to him intensely. On his return from the South Seas these statues, direct, stiff and archaic, combined with his late vision of scintillant light and hot, luscious colour, became active influences in his work.

Gauguin had a considerable amount of Peruvian Indian blood in him, and his desire for the South was not a superficial one. Rather was it an atavistic necessity for the wild that made him intolerant of cities and culture and highly complex modes of living. This same instinct, manifesting itself through his art, drove him toward a simple and direct statement of a vision, toward an unrestraint which no civilised community would permit him. He wanted something naïve — something expressed by broad planes and rich colours. He had imitated the Impressionists, copied Manet's Olympia and seen Giottos; and by reducing these varied influences to their simplest terms he made his art. Émile Bernard, an indifferent painter and writer, who temperamentally was not unlike Gauguin, claims priority for this manner of painting; but even if it were true, it would mean nothing. Gauguin's canvases of 1888 give undeniable promise of what he would eventually do, and in 1889 his Jeunes Bretonnes fully reveals the trend of all his later endeavours. Bernard was at best but a clever imitator, and his canvases in Gauguin's style appear inferior and superficial when compared with such pieces as Tahïtiennes and Ruperupe.

The Impressionists went toward descriptive beauty, but Gauguin searched for and found an emotional interpretation of nature adapted to large decoration. It is problematical whether or

not he is artistically indebted to Van Gogh, for one can attribute the fact that he painted his best European pictures immediately after his return from Arles either to Van Gogh's teachings or to the effects of southern colour and atmosphere. The question though is of little importance. Every man, no matter how great or small, goes through a formative period in which he receives numerous influences. At any rate, just before Van Gogh died he called Gauguin "*maître.*" During their final periods, however, we know that the two men differed totally; and in 1891 Gauguin showed that he was under no man's influence. In the Femmes Assises à l'Ombre des Palmiers and Vaïraoumati Téi Oa, he was already the Gauguin we know so well. The first is a sunlit landscape with the hills and palm-trees broadly and flatly painted. The women who are seated in the great pool of cool shade have all the sagely childish drawing that we find later in his more complete pictures. In the second, the flowered stuffs, the heavy limbs and the perpendicularity of design, which appear so frequently later on, are more than suggested; and the colour has all the beauty of his best efforts.

It was after Gauguin's first sojourn to the Islands that he came back to France a barbarian, eager to stupefy the world of arts not only by his pictures but by his very attire. In this he failed. The public had barely recovered from its Impressionist shock, and Gauguin went to Brittany. Here he gathered about him many of the painters he had known before, as well as some new ones, and formed a group of young men who were ready to react against the pettiness of the

Neo-Impressionistic methods and to establish a new art school. They called themselves Synthesists, afterward Cloisonnists, and some of them later became Classicists. Here forgathered Sérusier, Maurice Denis, Filiger, De Hahn, Seguin, Verkade, Anquetin, Laval, Louis Ray, Chamaillard, Fauché, Bernard and Schuffenecker, few of whom are discoverable today. Among these painters the slightest tendency toward divisionistic methods was looked upon as heresy; and religious pictures were in the ascendant, especially with Verkade. The enthusiasm of these young men for their simple and "synthetic" retrogression to the elemental led them to decorate tavern walls and ceilings, to paint windows and barn doors, and to proclaim themselves on all occasions as the only authoritative and vital artists of the day. They had forgotten Renoir and Cézanne because they detested all intellectual and scientific accuracy. And they had not known the latter with sufficient intimacy to be directly influenced by his work. Under the sway of Gauguin's unsophisticated æsthetics and Bernard's rhetorical eloquence they went far afield in their search for a simple and elemental synthesis. Zeal was not wanting. They argued, caroused and fought continually. This last activity was the cause of Gauguin's lameness all the rest of his life. Little or nothing of lasting merit came out of this group which, though it moved from Pont-Aven to Pouldu, has come to be known as the Pont-Aven School. Most of its members are dead or have been swallowed up in the commercial currents of today. A few, like Bernard, Fauché and Schuffenecker, are doing indifferent art. They con-

tributed nothing to the modern idea outside of the impetus they gave to the anti-academic spirit. There was among them more enthusiasm than talent, more polemical energy than genius.

Gauguin, though he talked as loudly as the others, painted also. At length their conversations lost their novelty for him. He felt once more the call of his Islands. He was still after an ideal, a congenial setting. These things France could not give him. Again, the necessity of accepting charity from his friends was too humiliating a trial for a nature so timid. His high-handed attitude was only a mask to hide his desire to shrink away. He was always uneasy in cities and unhappy among people who did not try to understand him. He detested the artificialities of Parisian women. His robust sensuality craved a more solid and artless Eve. In France his nature, so responsive to the glow of colour and the primitive lure of archaic forms, saw only chill tints and inutile complications. To him the South meant the richness and heat of romantic emotions, the satiety of the senses. It appealed to his deep love of chaotic and untrammelled nature. He had tasted it before in his seafaring, and he turned to it now as to an only salvation. It was at this time that Carrière arranged the passage. Gauguin was never to see Europe again.

The Impressionists had made infinitesimal spots of colour in order to imitate as exactly as possible the colour effect of nature and to increase the dynamic power of a canvas by making it give off a light of its own. By this technique they had incorporated both air and sunlight into their art.

The Neo-Impressionists made mathematical the Impressionists' haphazard stippling and had turned the spots into almost symmetrical squares. The squares were slightly separated, and the bare canvas was permitted to show between them in order to achieve a greater brilliance and a more vivid light. Van Gogh later elongated these squares into threads until his pictures resembled tapestries. There was no longer the technical unconcern in painting which Pissarro and Monet had prescribed. Paradoxically enough, while art was growing more scientific it was also becoming less significant. With the men of Pont-Aven the reaction against a too technically self-conscious painting began to set in. Their ardent advocacy of primitive conception and method was the rebound from the pseudo-scientific verbiage which, in the "advanced" studios, took the place of good painting. Consequently they favoured the broad arrangement of surfaces; classic, if the artist leaned temperamentally in that direction; barbaric, if his tastes so inclined him; Gothic, Chinese, Japanese or primitive — all according to which his inclination led him. But all work had to be completed during the first fury of inspiration, conceived imaginatively, and executed from the decorative standpoint. Gauguin, by his quick wit and youthful impetuosity, easily dominated the circle and developed, through the constant interchange of opinions, his vague ideas concerning a "synthetic" art. On his third and last voyage to the Islands his greatest work was done. Here he carried out those ideas which had had their inception at Arles and which had become crystallised at Pont-Aven. He made his

art entirely out of colour, but instead of profiting by the teachings of Daumier and Cézanne whose visions were the most simultaneous in the history of art, he chose rather to emulate the early and ingenuous schools of plastic expression. In this his painting was retrogressive.

But there was another and more important side to Gauguin. He at least strove for a larger and more purely emotional interpretation of nature than had been attempted before: and our interest in him is due largely to the broad and peaceful vision he gives us. Monet put many greens in one tree. Gauguin saw the tree as green, but by depicting it in broad planes of pure pigment, he made it a more intense green than Monet could ever have done. "A metre of green is greener than a centimetre of green," said Gauguin; and this principle he applied to all his work. Instead of portraying light by colour as the Impressionists did, he interested himself only in the colour which resulted from light. Thus he was able to raise his paintings to the highest possible pitch of purity, while still being preoccupied with nature. In painting a landscape where a woman with a cerulean blue dress was seated among green trees on an ochre beach with purple hills in the rear, and where the yellow sunlight shone on the tree trunks and in the woman's hair, Gauguin would first of all draw apart the blues as much as possible. The woman's dress would be painted almost blue-green, and in order to contrast this colour with the other blue in his subject, he would paint the sky blue-violet-violet. Thus he would produce a greater range of emotional colour than if the two blues had been pale and similar in

tint. Furthermore, he would make the sunlight a yellow-orange-orange and the sand a spectrum yellow. The trees would then be recorded as yellow-green and the hills as red-red-purple. By this process all the parts of the picture were differentiated, with the result that the canvas had a strong carrying power. This power was further increased by the figures being sharply outlined.

Gauguin's composition has little importance. It takes the form of perpendicularities, and rarely is any rhythmic order discernible. It is of a piece with the Romanesque painting in Saint-Savin near Poitiers. All his objects are personifications of calm, and are rooted in their environment as well as in the earth. They do not seem merely to pose there: Gauguin's work is not superficial to this extent, — but they grow naturally out of their matrix like flowers or trees, unconscious but immovable. The passivity which pervades them is not the calm of completion or of the perfect rest which comes after mental exercise, but rather the calm of the lethargic mind which avoids thought, dislikes action and is content to dream. Technically this feeling is caused by lines at right angles to the horizon, by big simple planes on which the eye can rest free from the disturbance of line opposition, by large flat patterns of dark tonality conducive to peace and introspection. Even the contoured volumes have a greater extent of base than of apex and thus add to the picture's aspect of immobility. Gauguin's drawing is interesting in that it portrays a race highly susceptible of picturisation. His models are impelling because it is an adven-

ture to explore their parts, their joints, their distortions and disproportions. Their beauty is heavy and cumbersome, like that of the stone images of the Aztecs.

That which interests us most in Gauguin however is his colour. In this medium he arrived at a sumptuousness unsurpassed by preceding painters. His art was a new application of the old principle of wall decoration. Many had made use of broad planes of colour before his advent, but none had heightened the significance of these planes sufficiently to express nature. He was the first realist in decoration, and from him come, by direct descent, Matisse and a horde of lesser men like Fritz Erler, Leo Putz, R. M. Eichler, Adolf Münzer, Rodolphe Fornerod, Alcide Le Beau and Gustave Jaulmes. The æsthetic import of a Puvis de Chavannes is almost equal to that of Gauguin, but the former's greys and grey-blues appear washed-out and dead, while Gauguin's pictures vibrate with the heat of tropical sunlight and the richness of tropical colour. Gauguin, however, could get no orders. His work was too sensuous. Interior decoration would have had to be far more joyous than it was at that time for his exotic creations to find a place on walls and ceilings.

Gauguin's animating desire was to synthesise his pictures — to make each part of them relative to all the other parts, to order them as to colour, line and tone in such a way that they would give forth the impression of a simple vision, a perfect ensemble. This desire was in the air of the day. The Impressionists had unconsciously approached synthesis by using light and air as a solvent.

Cézanne had gone much deeper and ordered form by means of colour. In Seurat Gauguin saw almost completely set forth an expression which by its simplicity satisfied him. Some assert that he was also influenced by Degas. But whether this is so or not, certain it is that there is more of Ingres in him than of Giotto. With Seurat as a starting-point — that is, the linear Seurat of La Baignade and Un Dimanche à la Grande-Jatte — Gauguin quickly abolished the tiny and labourious spotting which Impressionism and Pointillism had taught him, and branched out into simpler design and greater chromatic brilliancy. By these departures he achieved his synthesis. But this triumph must not be overestimated. There are degrees of synthesis. Rubens, Giotto, Degas, Ingres, Böcklin, Botticelli — all are synthetic, but all are by no means of equal importance. While synthesis is necessary to art, it is not the ear-mark of great art alone. The order which is obtained by three harmonious lines is not so extended an order as that found in the multilinear drawings of Pollaiuolo: and this complication of æsthetic ordonnance is what makes a Donatello more significant than a piece of negro sculpture, a Scarsellino greater than a Matisse, and an El Greco more puissant than a Mazzola-Bedoli. Furthermore, when this complete surface order extends itself into three dimensions it becomes an infinitely greater moving power. When from simple straight lines on a flat surface the artist carries his creation into opposition, development and finality, he is pushing the frontiers of his painting to art's extreme limits.

Gauguin's temperament was simple in the extreme. He had fallen under the sway of Manet: he had gone to a rugged country of primitive instincts where singular costumes were a part of the landscape: he had studied the stone and wooden figures in the old churches and cross-roads of Brittany, and had found the elemental to his liking. Consequently in synthesising his art he used simple forms, straight lines and large planes of shadow and light, all of which were presented on a flat surface, so that all the parallelisms and elementary curves of the picture would deliver themselves to the average spectator at first glance. His method of filling or balancing a canvas was little more than primitive, and the curved lines of light and shadow, which are intended to entice the eye, are so isolated that when we at length arrive at their end we discover they are without rhythmic intention. Nor is there a generating line out of which the others grow.

Gauguin's linear harmony is no greater, if a trifle more diverse, than in the Byzantine mosaic decorations in S. Vitale. Indeed the emotion we experience before each of them is to all purposes the same. The richness of medium in the mosaics is amply compensated for by Gauguin's richness of foliage forms and floral designs. The decorative colours in both are equally effective. As moderns we might get more enjoyment out of Gauguin's heat and brilliance and the diversity of his silhouette, but at the same time there is a greater archæological attraction and a more spiritual interest for us in the ancient work. Intrinsically one is as great as the other. Those seeking for calm will find it in equal degree in both, for

DEUX TAHÏTIENS GAUGUIN

in each it is produced by the same method: by the static representation of form rather than by a sequence of movement. Gauguin's sculpture has the same qualities as his paintings, and resembles the religious effigies of some barbaric tribe. The figures are upright and rigid, their backs against a straight support, as in Egyptian architectural art.

Gauguin said many times that when a painter was before his easel he must not be the slave either of nature or the past. This is true, but as a principle it is too limited. Although he himself lived up to it, he did not go far enough beyond it to do truly significant work. He arrived at the brilliancy of nature by a method distinctly different from nature's; and while refusing to be dominated by the past, his temperament was such that he fabricated an art much closer to antiquity than that of the Zaks and the Rousseaus who servilely imitated it. He accomplished what he set out to accomplish. His failure to give birth to great art was due to the intellectual limitations of his ambitions. His place in modern painting, however, is secure.

That great cycle of æsthetic endeavour which was set in motion by the discovery of oil painting found its termination in Rubens. The cycle which Delacroix and Turner ushered in was less extended. Being more concrete in its aims, it took only five decades to reach completion in the works of Renoir. The first cycle, born with fixed materials, was based on an absolute and physiological law of composition which can never radically change, and therefore permitted of an extensive development and variation. Decadence

naturally set in after its means had lost their ability to inspire artists. The second cycle was one of research, and during it artists were so narrowly focused on nature that they lost sight of the foundation laid down during the first cycle. Had their concentration not been rudely disturbed their data hunting would have carried them hopelessly afield. Gauguin exposed the futility of the meticulous imitation of nature's effects, and by so doing took a step forward toward liberty of method. For this reason he is of importance. Painters were rapidly becoming scientists. By turning men's minds away from nature to broadly natural pictures Gauguin invited them once more to become artists. He was the link which joined experimental research to pure creation. The first cycle gave us an absolute composition: the second furnished a scientific hypothesis for art: the third, of which Cézanne was the primitive, combined the first two and thus opened the door on an infinity of achievement. Gauguin prevented the second from running into decadence by showing its uselessness as an isolated procedure.

IX

DEGAS AND HIS CIRCLE

THE development of art itself is no more mechanical than the artistic development of the individual: in both there are irregularities, retrogressions, forward spurts, divagations. Renoir first appeared with a rhythmic line-balance which first grew luminous, then voluminous, until it blossomed forth into his full form and line and colour. Sometimes he leapt ahead in one quality and deterioriated in another, abandoned one for the glory of the other, and sacrificed continually until by experience he knew his limitations. Then consciously, with all the reins in hand, he progressed steadily to his highest point of efficiency. Art in general also advances sporadically. Delacroix gave a new freedom to subject and drawing, resuscitated composition and found a new use for colour. He was the embryonic statement of the ends of modern art. Courbet, ignoring colour, totally divorced subject-matter from antiquity and liberated drawing from the accepted style. He carried art forward, but not in a direct line. Daumier gave us a new conception of form, but contented himself with Spanish colour: his art, though fragmentary, was another step toward a unique vision. Then came Manet who, forgetting composition, exalted the documentary freedom of Courbet and began the

study of light. He, also, was a continuation of the modern art impulse, but in his struggle for the new he forgot the foundations. The Impressionists accepted passively all that had come before. They raised colour to an important place in painting and brought it to the consideration of all artists by showing its potency in the production of intense emotion. Renoir used their inspiration; reverted to the past through Delacroix, Courbet and Daumier; combined all that had preceded him; and in an incomparable flourish closed up the possibilities of his experimental forerunners. In him was a consummation. But there had to be a transition also, unless art was to stand still. Gauguin, though he went so far back that he passed to a time when composition did not exist, interpreted, but did not imitate, nature. The Neo-Impressionists continued the impetus of Pissarro. Cézanne unearthed secrets from nature which linked him to Impressionism, and by applying them arbitrarily to classic organisations, became an interpreter of the past as well as of the future.

At each step of this broad and prolific advance there were those painters who, profiting by the teachings of the great, set themselves to imitate and ornament the exteriors of their faintly-understood masters and to emphasise the qualities of texture, *matière* and prettiness. So rapid was the evolution of modern endeavour that nearly every painter overlapped his seemingly remote predecessor. Edgar Degas was born more than twenty years before the death of Delacroix. He was one of those painters who, content to remain stagnant,

employ the qualities which have been handed down to them and breathe into old inspirations the flame of individual idiosyncrasy. He was a man who impressed everyone by the strength of his personality and by the power of his caustic wit. In his youth he travelled in Italy and America and went to school, not for artistic training, but merely as a concession to the conventions of the day. He copied Holbein and Lawrence. In his earlier portraits there are undeniable traces of the German master: the Lawrence influence exhibited itself in his femininity more than in actual technical innovations. He was an enthusiastic visitor to the Café Guerbois on the Avenue de Clichy where, from 1865 until the war, Manet was the dominating figure, and where the Impressionists and such men as Lhermitte, Cazin, Legros, Whistler and Stevens came to discuss æsthetics.

Although never radically opposed to scholasticism, as were these other men, Degas was nevertheless persuaded to share in a joint exhibition in 1867 with his revolutionary companions. But the ridicule of the public disgusted him so thoroughly that he never exposed again. He shut himself up in his studio, and there, isolated from his fellow painters and the vulgar populace, worked out his own salvation. He instinctively hated the brummagem show of popularity and put into his every subject this disgust with life's hypocrisies. Even in his prancing ballet figures, though they are in full light and amid joyous settings, one senses the satire which led to the depiction of their apparent *sans-souci*. One reads in them the sordid misery of their home life, the

long trying hours of muscular strain, and the deceit of their simulated smiles. His synthetic figures — synthetic in that they were without details and accidents of contour which would detract from the vision of the whole — came to him direct and with little variation from Ingres — not the Ingres of Stratonice but the Ingres of the drawings in the *Musée Ingres* at Montauban. His study of this master gave him a greater insight into the academic construction of the human figure than any school could have done. It permitted him to set forth a firmly drawn body in any pose with equal ease. This facile mastery of action is one of his greatest claims to popularity.

Gauguin held that nothing should be moving in a canvas, that all the figures should be static, arrested in their pose, and calm. Degas represented Gauguin's antithesis. He strove to catch his model in flight. He immobilised their *élan*, and registered those characteristics of a model which express action at its intensest dynamic instant. In all his racecourse pictures the very horses have that delicate balance of mincing tread that we first feel when we look at their prototypes in life — that dainty and slight resiliency as of weight on springs. Monet, on the one hand, caught the ephemeral effect of light on nature: Degas, on the other, recorded the fleeting movement of objects, that is, the *physical* poise of a granted image, not the *æsthetic* poise which transmits itself to our subjectivities. He surprised the actional segment which epitomises the entire cycle of movement. Everything he touches becomes as charming and interesting as a well-

staged scene. His sympathies with the Impressionist colour methods and his manner of handling his material add to this charm and make pleasurable, fresh and adventuresome what would otherwise be banal and sometimes even ugly and devoid of interest. He paints the racehorse, which Géricault first introduced into French art, and, by surrounding it with a vernal spring atmosphere, violet hills and green and ochre stubble, and by catching its instantaneous action, makes of it a picture with a rich and colourful surface — a surface beside which a Géricault, judged from the same illustrative standpoint, appears stiff and black.

Degas, in short, paints the kind of pictures which the general public calls "artistic" — a word which, though loosely used, has come to have a distinct connotation when applied to arts and crafts. Vases, plaques, panels, screens, decorations, posters and book-plates are all "artistic" provided they fulfil certain simple requirements. The bizarre exteriors of German art have given great impetus to this qualitative adjective. The word is used indeterminately, and its popular meaning has not been defined. But in Degas we find it exemplified; and by studying him we may discover its exact limitations. "Artistic" commonly refers to paintings in which the exactitude of drawing is lost in a nonchalant *sensibilité*, and in which the *matière* takes on a seductive interest merely as a stuff or a substance, the love of which lies deep in the most intellectual of men. The tactile sense will be found at the roots of the average person's idea of an "artistic" work. This desire for superficial and material

beauty, as of a rare porcelain or of scintillating old silk, is a part of the same physical sensuality which makes some men choose rough-grained canvas, others the stone of the lithographer, others the fluid brushing of a Whistler or a Velazquez. The desire for texture is what led Degas to pastels. His pictures have something more than an illustrative value; they are highly attractive as *objets d'art* as well. But while this attractiveness heightened the popular value of his work, it indicated the inherent decadence of his aims.

Nor was it the only sign of his retrogression. There is not even pictorial finality in his work. He never painted subjects as such, but used them only as bases for arabesques. Surface-covering was his forte, and it is not remarkable that one so sensitive to objective action should have been such a master of balance. He could never have achieved such perfect balance had he not realised that a work of art must be done coldly and consciously and without passion for the model, and that all enthusiasm should come only from the progressing work itself. His arrangements are wholly natural ones, and we feel that no studio posing has gone into their making. In this naturalistic attitude he was continuing the modern spirit of arbitrary subject selection found in Courbet, Manet and Pissarro. But where these men painted with colour, Degas only tinted his drawings. Consequently his colour, as well as composition, was a reversion to a sterile past. Although we may admire his Après le Bain, La Toilette, the Trois Danseuses, Femme au Tub, La Sortie du Bain, Torse de Femme S'Essuyant,

DANSEUSES À LEUR TOILETTE DEGAS

Musiciens à l'Orchestre for their verisimilitude and lightness of treatment, their *imprévu* of arrangement and balance and their charm of colour, we can never credit their creator with even a slight genius, for all his pictures lack the rich volumes of a Daumier and the order of a Renoir.

Degas was neither academic nor revolutionary. He struck a middle course in which the scholastic and the heretical blent, and in blending neutralised each other's characteristics. In his canvases he tells inherently commonplace stories, but he does it with the force and the graceful ease of one on whom all the visions of the world have made a powerful impression. Life meant to him a pageant, neither moral nor immoral, but real, and as such interesting. If in what he tells us there seems a bit of the cynical indifference of a mind too fully disillusioned, it never obtrudes itself. He himself might have been surfeited and bitter, but his work contains only the barest hint of his temperamental retrospection. His comprehension of life's tragedies did not spoil his enjoyment in depicting them. Louis Legrand reveals the metropolitan lust of mankind; Forain, its bestiality; Toulouse-Lautrec, its viciousness. Each was prejudiced in some direction. Degas merely goes behind the scenes and by stripping his characters of their pretences shows them to us as they are, intimately and unsentimentally.

The other men in this circle of illustrators of which Degas was the dominant figure had distinctly individual traits. In no sense were they followers of one leader. Their preoccupation with illustration alone held them together.

Degas has given us well-balanced patterns with fragilely lovely surfaces. He was little interested in the traits of his models: he cared more for the picture than for individual character. With Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec this mental attitude was reversed. In his work are specific members of the *demi-monde*, marionettes who have all the accentuated vices, vulgarities, fatigues and pretensions of their trade. In their faces, moulded by unrestrained indulgences, joys and sorrows, we can read their innermost hopes and aspirations. We can reconstruct their entire day's activities. In order to study his characters Lautrec went to the *milieu* where gaiety was unchecked, where the denizens of the underworld — those unreal beings who live like fantastic flowers nourished by artificial light and colour — come to work and play. He saw and set down the principals in the Bohemian music halls, the *cafés-concerts* and the *cirques*, and those daylight moralists who come to relax viciously at night with all the *laisser-aller* of violent reaction. His search was for character; and in these establishments character did not masquerade in the hypocritical garb of pride and dignity. Passions were aired frankly, even proudly.

Lautrec had personal as well as artistic reasons for choosing this sphere. He had an ardent, almost febrile, desire to live fully and furiously. He was deformed; he had a man's head and body on a child's legs — the result of incompetent bone-setting in his youth. His family was a very old and noble one: his father was a sportsman, a lover of horses, a sculptor in his leisure moments. All the pride of race and dignity of class tumbled

from its pedestal in this young artist. He had worked in the schools of Bonnat and Cormon, had met and admired Forain, and had finally been revealed to himself by Degas who led him to the theatre. He drank much, one suspects, to forget his deformity, just as Van Gogh drank to forget disease. He sought solace in the ephemeral, visionary life of the cafés; and no action, no type, no expression escaped his probing notice. He had many friends to whom he confided. "I am only half a bottle," he would say. He adored women impersonally and romantically, but in his own station of life they looked upon him askance. Consequently he lived where money would always buy attention and where good-fellowship was repaid with good-fellowship.

Lautrec was an indefatigable worker, but his pictures possess little of the surface beauty of a Degas. Rather do they attest to a love of exaggerated and uncommon form, as do Chinese paintings. But in him is more order than in Degas. Compare Une Table au Moulin-Rouge with Degas's Café-Concert. In the first the character in the physiques of the principals harmonises with the character of the faces; and the female figure's hair, hat and fur-trimmed coat indicate the artist's love for grotesque and beautiful abstract form. There is more than balance here: there is the rudiment of an instinctive composition which Degas never had. Beside this picture the Café-Concert seems flat silhouette, sprightly and entertaining, but far from profound. The nucleus of composition can be found in all of Lautrec's best canvases, especially those he painted after his return from Spain. Toward the

end of his life he worked, for the most part, with a full brush and rich colours. Before this, however, pencil, chalk, lithographs and water-colours had claimed him. His greatest fluency was in the use of separated hachures of rich greyish colour on neutral backgrounds. This method of application permitted him line as well as colour; and with his lines, summary and economical though they were, he caught the animality of his subjects with as sure a hand as Monet caught the light and Degas the action.

Lautrec, with Chéret, revolutionised the poster art. There are few men today in this field who do not owe much to him. His love of the eccentricities of his model was an ideal gift for the poster-maker, and he had himself sufficiently in hand not to be led into the grotesque. He was a caricaturist in that he exaggerated characteristic traits, just as Matisse did in his sculpture. He always noted fully the uncommon, and his love of every manifestation of life gave him a wide range of inspiration. Life was his great adventure; his art was merely his diary. He is a historian of the theatre of his time and has left salient portraits of Loie Fuller, Polaire, Sarah Bernhardt, Mounet-Sully, Yahne and Anna Held. His types of the raptorial woman of the past — the kind that today is found in the hidden corners of Les Halles, at the fortifications and about the "Rue de la Joie" — are as real as the female characters of Balzac, Daudet, Augier and Prévost. They live in his pictures because one feels that they once were realities: his caricaturisations of them, as of his clowns and dancers, only intensify their intimate humanity.

To some it may seem strange that Lautrec should have liked Massys and Memlinc. But in the first he found trenchant characterisation, especially in such things as Head of an Old Man, The Courtesan and Portrait of a Canon. And he was temperamentally akin to Memlinc in such arrangements as the latter's The Casting of the Lots (a detail of Calvary) and Our Lord's Passion, at the Museum in Turin.

That the illustrators of this group were decadent is borne out in their subject-matter as well as in their methods. Since the earliest recorded antiquity artists have been attracted to the moving, the glittering, the brilliant; and the human occupation which embodies these three qualities most obviously is dancing. The men who are in love with life and not art and who paint and draw pictures merely to record their impressions, have always been hypnotised by the colour, the grace, the fluent movement and the rhythmic shiftings of dancers. These men, unable to analyse their emotions, have dreamed only of depicting objectively their photographic impressions of the dance. The artists who penetrated to the fundamental causes of rhythm used the dance only arbitrarily, whereas the superficial painters of the past saw in it merely the mosaic, the pattern, the arabesque. They thought that in portraying the dance literally they would arrive at its motive significance. But in this they failed. Had they done their figures in clay or stone they would have approached nearer their desire. But even this more masculine medium has, with few exceptions, resulted in failure. The dancing girls in the Grottoes of

Mahavelipore were used only by those puissant masters of form as friezes or shapes to fill in and ornament a vacant space. The Tanagra figurines are a purely decorative endeavour. In Greece it was not the men of Praxiteles's calibre, but the smaller talents like the potters who used the dance in their designs. Even a man as slight as Hokusai leaves it to a Toba Sojo to make his models caper. But the feminine talent of Degas finds in the dance absolute and unordered expression; and Lautrec and Legrand, both more robust than Degas, though minor and ornamentally illustrative artists, are seduced into portraying it often.

Louis Legrand was more of the "maker" of pictures than were his two contemporaries. His nature leaned toward the heavy and boisterous Sodoma rather than toward the Latin ideal of Tiepolo. This almost Teutonic racial penchant in him explains why the bestiality of his subject-matter is so often done in the manner of Goya, with broad black and white masses, not with the suggested line and the attractive *matière* of his master, Degas. There is much Teutonic blood in Spain, and Goya, while being far the greater artist even in his slightest etchings, is the nearest approach to Legrand in the treatment of themes. Goya paints moral decay with disgust and genius, whereas Legrand, with his slight gropings after order of a surface variety, glories in it as in a pursuit, and paints it with a leer. The Spaniard uses it as a temperamental means. The Frenchman, whose whole talent lies in a formula of draughtsmanship, works toward its creation as an end. His shallowness is at once apparent when

we compare his Maîtresse or his illustrations for Edgar Allan Poe's tales with etchings like Donde Vá Mamá or Buen Viaje. Psychologically he is intimately related to the *fin de siècle* movement in England; and, although a better and more healthy workman, he has a temperament singularly akin to that ineffectual Victorian academician, Walter Sickert.

In J.-L. Forain we have a man of different stamp, one who, knowing his ability for certain things, clings to them and does not attempt to thrust himself into the rank of artist. By developing his small potentialities to their highest actuality he has achieved as much as his confrères have by extraneous tricks and appearances. And there is no doubt that he comprehends art much better than they. His iconoclastic and acidulous cynicism, his ability to wrench from behind the veil of mundane hypocrisy the real motivation of an action, and his probing analysis which cannot be imposed upon by pretence, have touched on many sides of contemporary life — politics, extortion, courts, merchants, the *beau monde*, prostitution, religion, the theatre and the tawdry Bohemianism of Montparnasse. With a few straight and fluent strokes of the pencil he builds up a type of the blustering *parvenu* Jew, the mercenary picture dealer, the childish and vain actor who is avid for praise and obsessed with his vocation. Forain calls the actor a "*M'as-tu-vu?*" and depicts him as with that phrase ever on his lips. Baudelaire Chez les Mufles is one of the world's greatest monuments to human hypocrisy. A chlorotic bourgeoise is standing in the centre of a small gathering

reciting Baudelaire's verses. Around her are grouped types of self-satisfied and vicious masculinity, all pretending, like the speaker herself, to be feeling deeply the hidden spirituality of the poem. Some of the men have their heads raised high, others bowed low, for purposes of concentration. The whole picture is rough-hewn as though done with an axe in a square of clay. With the simplest means the artist gives us the impression of rugged stone and, at the same time, completion. The titles to his drawings are in the exact spirit of the pictures themselves, succinct, brutal and penetrating. Forain is the second greatest caricaturist the world has produced. He was not the artist that Daumier was, but as a serious creator of types and as a highly intelligent critic of contemporary shams, he is a master, even as Daumier was a master of a realm far above him.

Forain perfected what he set out to do, and for this praise is due him. That his ambition ran along a subpassage of æsthetic endeavour, as did that of his three confrères, he would be the first to admit. As artists these men cannot be judged either by the surface quality of their works or by their penetration into life and character. Such considerations have nothing to do with æsthetic emotion. No matter how much we may eulogise such painters — for they must be judged by their own standard rather than by a criterion set by a Rubens — our praise will never place them in the rank of plastic creators. They will ever remain in the realm of nearly perfect workmen with literary apperceptions. Toulouse-Lautrec, because of his love of formal distortion

for its own sake, probably comes nearer the higher level: there is in his work a slight æsthetic element. Degas will ever remain the piece of old velvet in a frame; Louis Legrand, the illustrator of the bachelor clubs; Forain, the expositor of life's pretensions.

It is these men who have given the greatest impetus to realistic illustration in all countries. Viewed from this standpoint they were a salutary, as well as a diverting, manifestation. By burrowing down into the depths of material existence they made unimportant such poetic men as Beardsley, Rossetti and Moreau. All good illustration after them took on a deeper meaning. It ignored the mendacious surfaces of things and strove to reproduce the undercurrents which lie at the bottom of human actions and reactions. Its mere prettiness was supplanted by subcutaneous characteristics. It sought for motives rather than emotions, for causes rather than effects. It became critical where once it had been only photographic. From Degas, Lautrec, Legrand and Forain comes directly the best illustrative talent in both Europe and America. Without these four men we would not possess the best work of Max Beerbohm, Hermann Paul, Bellows, Maxime Dethomas, Roubille, Carlopez, Carl Larson, Albert Engström, C. D. Gibson, E. M. Ashe, Boardman Robinson, Cesare, Blumenschein and Wallace Morgan, the last of whom is unquestionably the most artistic illustrator in either America or England.

X

HENRI-MATISSE

WHILE the bitter struggle against the narrow dictates of a retrospective and so-called classic academy was in progress, and before the older scholastic forces had finally been put to rout, the Impressionists calmly arrogated to themselves the authority of their dumbfounded predecessors. Their pictures, because more restricted and not based on the fundamentals of art, soon became as familiar and commonplace as the paintings of Gérôme, Cabanel and Bouguereau, and in becoming familiar settled into the groove of a new academism as immobile and self-satisfied as the old. The Neo-Impressionists were the first to react against them, and later Gauguin and his fellow synthesists openly declared war. Cézanne at that time was little known and less understood. Living apart and alone, he was counted out of the main struggle. The decadents of the movement, Degas and his circle, continued their popularising process: their eyes were so fixedly turned inward that they saw little of what was going on about them. Gauguin, putting aside imitation of nature for interpretation, began the great movement which was to culminate in the most extreme reaction against Impressionism—Cubism. And Matisse who, arous-

ing public interest in the new, is responsible for the popular Cézanne discussions of today, was the next man to carry on Gauguin's work of pigeon-holing Monet and his followers. But whereas the Impressionists had completely forgotten the classics, Gauguin wished to recommence the entire cycle by reverting to the forefathers of those very classics. He also had his decadent followers, but there was no one to continue his methods and inspiration. If it is difficult to perceive an analogy between him and a painter like Jacopo dei Barbari, compare the works of these men with a later drawing by Matisse. The similarity of the first two, by being contrasted with the latter, will at once become apparent. Gauguin clung close to the drawing of the primitive Christians; and the classic seed within him, though it never flowered, was never dead.

While the form in Matisse at times has all the suavity of contour of a Liombruno or a Romanelli, there is a more purely sensitive reason for it than in the well-taught decadents of the later Renaissance. In the classes of Bouguereau and Carrière at the Beaux-Arts he had seen to what an impasse a too great love of antiquity would lead. Furthermore, with his many copies in the Louvre, by command of the state, he began gradually to realise that the classics had become a fetich, and that the only salvation for a painter was to seek a different and less-known inspiration. This course was not so difficult as it had once been, for the younger men had already liberated themselves from popular mandates. The freedom of the artist was now an assured thing, and while

the public still scoffed and offered suggestions, it no longer felt that a man's expression was its personal concern. To be sure, popular rage against things which appeared incomprehensible was still evident, but it was the impotent rage which sneers because it can no longer strike. The *Salon des Artistes Indépendants* was in full swing, and the new artists who had ideas rather than tricks and who were intent on discovering new fields through devious experimentation, found therein a refuge where they could expose as conspicuously as could the academicians. In this healthful *Salon* Matisse has exhibited regularly up to a few years ago, and it was here and in the *Salon d'Automne* — another exhibition which at first was animated by high ideals but which has lately fallen into the hands of cliques and picture merchants — that his fame took birth.

With Matisse's advent we behold the paradox of an artist who is in full reaction against the Impressionistic and classic doctrines and who at the same time reveals a certain composition and makes colour of paramount interest. The Matisse of exotic inspiration came from the studio of Gustave Moreau who, by his intelligent toleration of the virile enthusiasms of his pupils, facilitated the way toward complete self-expression. There are Matisse drawings extant which are impeccable from the academic standpoint — drawings in which is found all the cold "right drawing" of the school. There are paintings in the Neo-Impressionistic manner, except that they display a sensitive use of harmonious colours, which should have shown Signac and Cross the error of their rigid science. Also there are still-

lives which recall Chardin, one of Matisse's great admirations; and at least one study of a head, done in Colorossi's old academy on the Rue de la Grande Chaumière, in which a love of Cézanne's form and colour mingles with a respect for Manet's method of applying paint.

Gauguin too served as a provenance for the later colour vision of Matisse. Indeed it is as much from Gauguin as from Cézanne that he stems. The broad planes of rich tones and the decorative employment of form in the former had as great an influence in Matisse's art as did the perfect displacement of spaces in the canvases of the Provençal master. Gauguin, while still leaning to the classic, desired a fresher impetus. He therefore sought distortion in exotic inspiration; but the man who was led to distortion through a pure love of unfamiliar form and to whom Matisse owes the deciding influence toward a new body, was the Spaniard Goya. The deformed, the grotesque and the monstrous were with Goya a passion. In his Caprichos it is easily seen that he, too, was tired of the established formulas regarding the human body, and strove to vary and enrich it. By emphasising a characteristic trait, by shifting a certain form, by exaggerating a certain proportion, he sought to obtain, as did Matisse, the complete expression of what he felt to be essential in his model. The deformations in Gauguin came as a result of an outline which after the first drawing was left unchanged for the sake of its naïf effect. But in Goya and Matisse the deformations are the result of a highly developed plastic sense which glories in new and unusual forms. With

them the human body is treated as the means through which an idea is expressed — an idea of form, not of literature. Compare, for instance, the drawing called Deux Tahïtiens, one of Gauguin's best works, with Matisse's Baigneuses, a canvas of three nudes one of which is playing with a turtle. In the former the proportions are distorted as much as in the latter, but these proportions are flat and are an end in themselves. They have no intellectual destiny. In the Matisse picture the exaggerations grow out of a desire to express more fully the form which the artist has felt to be important and characteristic. In the seated woman the torso and neck constitute a personal and original vision, and the crouching woman's back has as much solidity as the Vénus Accroupie of the Louvre.

Matisse's simplified vision of form came, as did all synthetic modern art, from Ingres and Daumier through Seurat, Degas and Gauguin. That Ingres, the master of so classic a school, should have unconsciously felt the need for modifying and simplifying an object is a significant indication of the fatigue which is always produced by an adherence to a set form. In his drawings the details are omitted merely because they do not further the achievement of his own particular kind of beauty. In Daumier they are absent because they detract from the spontaneous emotion of the whole; in Degas and Manet, because they hinder the fluency of action and obscure the complete and direct image; in Seurat, because they interfere with the suavity of line itself; and in Gauguin, because they preclude that naïveté of appearance he wished to obtain. In Matisse

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began the conscious process of making form arbitrary, of bending it to the personal requirement of expression. In Cubism form became even more abstract. In Ingres's drawings there is an entire lack of suppleness: his figures appear like a first sketch in wood for a German carving. In Gauguin this wooden look becomes a trifle more fluent; the proportions are artistically improved. And in Matisse there is no trace of the awkward or the stiff. While his form is more simplified than that of the two other painters, the simplifications come as a result of that artistic rightness of proportion which is an outgrowth of the ultimate refinement of knowledge and taste.

The trick of drawing of a Louis Legrand has no parallel in Matisse. In the work of the latter each figure or object, no matter how many times he has already drawn it, has a distinctively novel construction and presents a new vision. All familiar joints and hackneyed interpretations are absent. We have seen, for instance, the deltoids drawn in every conceivable pose of stress or calm. When one speaks of a nude we immediately visualise it with the angular shoulders, with the accustomed bulges over the upper arm which have been painted there in the same manner since the early Renaissance. In the delineation of deltoids the painter had become stagnant, accepting their conventional appearance as an external truth and recording them without thought. Matisse revolted against this fixed standard. Glance through his later nudes — and there are many of them — and every shoulder will present a different appearance; every arm will take on a

novel form. We speak here of these particular muscles because they seem to obtrude themselves upon the sensitive sight more than any others. Matisse, seeking to overcome this structural monotony, made each shoulder he drew a new form, a new adventure, by expressing, not the actual bone and muscle of the clinic, but the salient meaning of that shoulder in a given *milieu*. It is this same desire to do away with the hackneyed forms of art that has driven the modern poets away from classic metres and caused them to seek a more plastic and adaptable medium in *vers libre*. Rondeaux, ballades, quatrains, octaves and the like are today as intrinsically perfect forms as they ever were, but the significance of their beauty has been lost through overuse, through too great familiarity. Our minds pass over them as over well-learned lessons committed to memory.

It is thus Matisse felt about the classic forms of his predecessors. These forms had once been beautiful; intrinsically they were still beautiful; but they had been habitualised by constant repetition; and new ones were needed. In order to find them Matisse says that, when before a model, he tried to forget that he had even seen a nude before and to look upon it with the eyes of one who had never seen a picture. By this he does not mean that his vision was naïve, but that it was innocent of set rules and preconceived ideas of how form should be obtained. As a theory this attitude proved fruitful because, while he did not succeed in setting aside memory, he was nevertheless led to a conscious thrusting aside of his first impulses to depict form as he saw it. All

painters, even the greater artists of the past, had copied form as it presents itself to the eye, but Matisse forced himself, through painstaking analysis, to express form in a totally novel manner; and to a certain extent he succeeded. One might well ask why, in modifying the human body, he did not, for instance, omit a leg or a head, thus making his expression at once purer and more abstract. The answer is that he realised that the spectator, after the first shock at seeing the unexpected form and the consequent mental readjustment to the new vision, would nevertheless recognise the picture as a depiction of the human figure. Therefore a complete recognisability must be maintained. If the artist omitted an eye or a mouth, for example, the spectator would experience physically the incompleteness of the vision. He would feel, through personal association, the blindness or the suffocation as suggested in the picture; and these shocks, being secondary physiological sensations, would detract from the *æsthetic* pleasure provoked by the work. The point is an important one, for it demonstrates the impossibility of appreciating art purely as abstract form so long as recognisable objects are presented. As modern painting progressed the illustrative gradually became relegated.

Much impetus for his abbreviations and accentuations of form came to him with his personal discovery of the wood carvings of the African negroes, the sculpture of natives of Polynesia and Java and of the Peruvian and Mexican Indians. During the last five years we have heard much of these unknown artists and of their superlative ability for organisation and rhythm.

But they have been a little too quickly and enthusiastically accepted as criteria at the expense of those greater artists, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the East Indians and the Chinese. Matisse found in them an inspiration toward synthesis and also a substantiation for his own desire to emphasise salient characteristics. They influenced his motives in depicting only what was personally important and in doing away with unnecessary details. After him there came a horde of imitators who saw in negro sculpture the quintessence of artistic expression, who looked upon it as a finality of organisation and rhythmic composing. Such judgment, however, contains more of enthusiasm than of critical acumen. Negro sculpture has an interest for us only in so far as it is novel and untutored. Its organisation is of the most primitive kind, symmetrical rather than rhythmic, architectonic rather than plastic. It is the work of slightly synthetic artists who were without models and whose visions encompassed only certain traits of form which, when expressed, became not composed but balanced, not imitative but abstract. The abstractness of negro sculpture, its bending of all human forms to an ornament, its archaic rigidity which is the antithesis of fluent movement — these are the qualities which have so gripped the imaginations of minor modern artists. In reality the negro sculptors did not seek these qualities consciously. Their lack of realistic observation was due to their partial isolation from exterior influences such as the Greeks and Egyptians, and to their desire to make an ornament of all images.

It was the Persians, however, who influenced

Matisse more than did negro sculpture. He found in these artists a practical lesson in the application of his beliefs — a lesson which substantiated the tonic division and formal improvisation of Goya and the decorative colour application of Gauguin. Besides he learned from them a more direct method of image making, a method which was at once more delicate and more femininely sensitive. After seeing the pictures done by Matisse in Algiers, and such paintings as La Glace sans Tain, and after looking at the vistas through the open doors and windows in some of his large interiors, one realises at once the great influence these exquisitely delicate painters of ancient Persia had on him. The decorative illustrations of the Mille et Une Nuits, published in Paris by Fasquelle, are so similar to some of his pictures that one is inclined to believe he studied this book before painting them. His superiority lies in his finer comprehension of the human form and in the great diversity he exhibited in the repetition of its component parts. Persia, like other nations, had an academy, and while its yield was more charming and less given to complex reproductions, it had no more æsthetic importance than have the art schools of our own day. But unlike ours it had not forgotten the necessity of formal distribution in the making of artistic arrangements. This distribution in its flat sense Matisse appropriated to his own ends, and by applying to it freer modern means, made his art more æsthetically significant than that of the Persians.

His modern means were the outgrowth of his understanding of colour in its capacity to incite

emotion. His first essays in this field were greyish. Later, through divisionistic methods, they grew brighter; and finally his colour became pure and was applied in large planes. His works of this period shine as a source of light, and with his development of exaggerated forms his colour interpretations also become exaggerated. Where he saw a green in a shadow he painted it a pure green; where he saw a yellow in light he made it a pure yellow; and so on with the other colours. But in these interpretations there is more than a mere desire to record hastily an optical vision. Each colour is pondered at length in its relation to the others. It is changed a score of times, modified and adjusted; and when it is finally posed it is artistically "right." In other words, it fills harmoniously an important part in a picture where understanding and taste are the creators. In the work of Matisse *sensibilité* plays the all-important rôle, and while his results are satisfying as far as they go, there are times when we could wish for a greater rhythmic sense, a more conscious knowledge of the profundities of composition, and a less dominating desire to free each form and line from classic dictates.

With his colour we can find no such fault. Though here his knowledge, like that of all other artists before him, is limited, the perfect harmony between tints, which in him reaches a more advanced stage than in any preceding artist, is the result of a highly sensitive eye and an impeccable taste. The beauty of his colour alone makes him of paramount importance. Every one of his canvases is a complete colour gamut created by taste and authenticated by science not only as

to pure colour but also as to greys and tone. In his still-lives he chooses objects alone for their colour and form, and his sense of proportion is so developed and his reduction of line is carried to so final an economy that, as flat as these objects are, they seem to have a rich consistency and to extend themselves into visual depth. As in the case of all men who deviate from the narrow and well-worn path of monotonous tonality, Matisse is accused of dealing in raucous and blatant colours which set the head aching and the eyes smarting. But the accusation is true only of his followers who display little sensitivity and even less artistry, and who, in imitating the superficial aspects of his work, see only grotesque distortions and pure colour. Matisse once had a school where he endeavoured to develop the native talents of the Americans, Poles, Russians and Germans; but when a Bohemian woman, in reply to his question as to what she wished to do, answered, "*Je veux faire le 'neuf'*," he abandoned the enterprise and retired to Clamart. She unwittingly summed up the desire of those meagre painters who, on seeing something novel, immediately throw themselves into imitating it. Matisse's followers approach his colour gamut, but they never bridge that lacuna which separates a precise art from one which is *à peu près*. It is the last delicate refinement of perfect harmony which Matisse possesses and which his imitators can not attain to, which places him in the rank of greatness.

Matisse is called the *Chef des Fauves*, and his art has been catalogued and labeled, turned into a "school" and has come to be known in many

quarters as Post-Impressionism, although that title, as well as the one of Fauvism, was originally intended to designate all the art movements after Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism and included such widely dissimilar men as Cézanne, Van Gogh, Picasso, Kandinsky, Matisse and Friesz. It stood for the new vitality in art, for the contemporary animating spirit, and implied an epoch rather than a movement. It was not sufficiently specific, however; and while modern art in the main is a homogeneous development of new means, its forces are too diverse and its evolution too complex to permit of its being described by a blanket term. It was therefore natural that in an endeavour to understand the underlying forces of modern painting a process of critical differentiation should have been instituted. But labels are offensive and impertinent when attached to serious æsthetic endeavours, and are apt to lead to misunderstanding and errors of judgment. The canvases themselves must be the final test of a movement's enduring vitality. Matisse is himself the whole impetus of the movement he represents. With the one exception of Cézanne, he is more remote from his followers than any other modern leader. He repeats himself so little that his disciples cannot make a fetich of his canons. Indeed, he does not work by rote or law, except in so far as there is a law governing his personal impressions and predilect ons.

Although Matisse's greatest impetus to modern art, after his carrying form nearer to an abstract conception, is the harmonising of colour, his finest canvases are those in which the form pre-

PORTRAIT DE FAMILLE HENRI-MATISSE

dominates, as for instance the Jeu de Balles, La Musique — esquisse, La Musique (*panneau décoratif*) and Baigneuses. In these pictures, however, there is an entire absence of rhythm in the Renoir sense, but they possess a perfect disposition of forms to fill a given space, a harmony of subject with its frame, a dazzling succession of uncommon and beautifully proportioned spaces and an amazing feeling for two-dimensioned form. Where with Matisse the distinct *parti pris* of reverting to a primitive inspiration was excusable, such an attitude was worse than folly for those who came after him. With him it was a manifestation of the disgust of an impatient and experimental mind for stereotyped expression: with his followers it was only an imitation of his motives, and hence it was decadent. If Matisse partially understood Giotto and Michelangelo, the understanding contributed little to his art. His greatest claim to consideration is that he gave painting its final impulse toward abstraction. But his canvases, while being æsthetically just, are not æsthetically satisfying, because in composition he never penetrated further than the surface. And even on the surface he did not attain to a greater fluency than that permitted by parallelisms and simple oppositions, although there has never been an artist who more perfectly adapted his expression to the shape and size of his canvas.

That all great artists worked like him from the standpoint of creating recognisable form by abstract thought, does not detract from his fine destiny. Where other artists failed to drag art from the quicksands of literary instantaneity,

Matisse succeeded. His evolution was direct and logical, as a close study of his work will show; and those who see in him an *arriviste* may with equal justice bring the same charge against Michelangelo. His æsthetic sources and admirations, of which so much has been written, are important in understanding the genealogical foundations of art, but they are of little moment in the actual enjoyment of his pictures. Looking impartially at his classic influences on the one hand and his Persian and negro influences on the other, it is difficult to see just where the benefits of the latter lie. Matisse merely shifted his inspiration from the greatest masters of form to the slighter masters — from a well-known and great antiquity to a little-known and less significant one. However, if negro sculpture can help produce a man like Picasso, and the Persian stuffs and enamels one like Matisse, they serve after all a high purpose.

XI

PICASSO AND CUBISM

CUBISM first and foremost is an attempt to make art more arbitrary in its selection of compositional forms. In all ancient painting only the human figure was used as a basis for organisation. Later landscape widened the scope of the painter's material possibilities; but even the introduction of this new element merely extended the boundary of subject-matter. The essence of art remained the same. Landscape permitted new forms to be interwoven with the old ones, without making the old more plastic. The elasticising process was what the painter had always desiderated, but his literalness was such that he never went beyond primary distortions of the human body.— distortions so small that they were almost unnoticeable. With the Greeks and Chinese these deformations were practised in order to beautify the body's relative proportions; with the East Indians and Michelangelo, to accentuate the emotion of forceful movement; with Renoir, to express form fully in its relation to the generating line of each picture; and with Matisse the distortions were the the result, first, of a reaction against a hackneyed classic system, and later, of a desire to divorce æsthetic pleasure from mental association, in other words, to make form abstract rather than

personal. In him there is no rhythmic composition, and while, as in the case of Renoir, his pictures are great as ensembles, each part of them is a separate item which does not depend, for appreciation, on its rapport to the whole. His is an art of colour, of sensitive and inspiring form in two dimensions — a decorative art of a high order. As such it is at once a derivation of Impressionism and a development of Impressionistic colour through the channels of taste.

Cubism is a far more arbitrary art than Matisse's. In its extreme expression it depends, not so much on the artist's adroitness at interpreting nature, as on his ability to express pure æsthetic emotion in its relation to form — form being used here in its extended sense to connote the solidity of the entire picture and the block relation of each part to the other parts. Composition prior to the Cubists had been the rhythmic organisation of a picture's integral parts by line, volume, chiaroscuro and colour. A totally unrelated set of objective figures or forms was drawn together into an ensemble by these abstract æsthetic means. Cubism retained the older methods of form and conception, and added to them the illustrative device of disorganising and rearranging objectivity so that the separated parts would intersect, overlap and partly obscure the image. Thus was presented a picture replete with all aspects of the model, that is, a picture in which the expression presented not only the vision of reality as it discloses itself to our eyes, but the vision which delivers itself to our intelligences, with its actions and reactions, its many and changing miens, its linear and voluminous

struggles, its solidity and its transparency. In Cubism the details of this ubiquitous and omnifarious vision are subjugated to arbitrary order and expressed in tones of warm and cold.

At the outset Cubism was a Dionysian reaction against the flowing and soft decoration of the schools of Bouguereau and the Impressionists. The precise and masculine minds of a new cycle could not rest satisfied with the single melody of their immediate predecessors. Courbet, the Cubists' prototype on the side of painting which dealt entirely with objectivity, reacted against corresponding feminine tendencies in the schools of David and Ingres; and the decisive blow he struck in 1850 with his L'Enterrement à Ornans had a psychological parallel in the Cubists' exhibit in 1911. While Manet seemed to continue Courbet he in reality retrogressed to a classic prettiness. His achievements may be compared to those of the Orphists who, while seeming to carry on the principles of Cubism, nullified the effect of that school by the misapplication of colour. Cubism itself ignored colour and curved lines. It was a further step toward a more intellectual type of painting. The modern artist's mind, in becoming more self-conscious, was consequently growing more precise in its expression. And since the Cubists were the primitives of a new era, it was natural that this precision should express itself in straight lines and angular forms. The inconsistency of these artists lay in the fact that, while their first desire was to make their art arbitrary, they were so preoccupied with the dynamism of objectivity that the main object of their work was deputised. In the canvases of

Picasso's followers naturalism is the first consideration. As a result the organisation of emotion-impelling form is obscured. It was from Cézanne that the Cubists garnered the greater part of their theories, and even the appearance of their work is not unlike his. Cézanne realised that a mere imitation of reality, no matter how interesting, could never set in motion the wheels of æsthetic ecstasy; and so he translated nature into a subjective impression of reality by expressing it in a complete order which was itself dynamic. The Cubists, profiting by his discoveries of linear and tonal modification, essayed to found a school on certain of his better-known and more easily grasped practices. The spirit of precision, the need for a renovation, and the example of Picasso who at one period copied the angularities of negro sculpture — all gave momentum to the movement. Later were introduced the philosophical reasonings and scientific explanations of which there has recently been so much discussion.

The total absence of colour in the Cubists is ascribable to the same revolt against prettiness and ambiguity that made them alter their line and form. They felt the subjective solidity of Cézanne without understanding that it was brought about by the use of colour whose emotional possibilities he had profoundly penetrated. In fact his art was composed entirely of minute chromatic planes which, by their complete adaptability to a given position in space, produced the intensest form. The Cubists' planes are based, not on colour, but on objective form itself, and are expressed by tone. In this respect Cubism is diametrically opposed to the conception of

Cézanne. With him form was a result of the plastic employment of colour. With the Cubists even tone is subjugated to formal planes. In them we do not experience the subjectivity of emotion which can be produced alone by colour. Their pictures represent a recognisable solidity which, by an image, expresses subjective processes. Cézanne's simultaneous vision of reality had to do purely with the most mobile element of art; the Cubists attempted to express psychological phenomena by the limited methods of the early primitives. Their inability to sound (not in theory but actually) the possibilities of colour in the creation of æsthetic form, has caused them to diverge from the direct path in the development of means, and has restricted permanently their initial desire for concentrated composition. The Impressionists experimented in a highly dynamic element; but the Cubists have only dabbled in mental processes which, even should they become perfected, could give us only the sequential vision of a human action. The Cubist doctrine embraces no more than a side issue in an art which primarily has to do with the organisation of form. In the effort of the Cubists to create a pure art they merely disguise objectivity by abstract thought. This is by no means the same as creating abstract form — that is, form which is not reminiscent of a particular natural object; and by failing in this they let pass the great opportunity of taking the final step from Matisse to purity. They took only a half step, for in their exultation they forgot the preceding advances in composition.

In such forgetfulness there was nothing unusual. Every new movement in the progress of art has

about it a certain isolation of ambition. The first innovators push out the boundary on one side; their followers, on another; and the final exponents of a method, having fully assimilated what has preceded them, combine the endeavours and accomplishments of their forerunners and go forward to new achievements. Cézanne had recognised that he could never round out his own cycle. No stricture can attach to his incompleteness: his life was too short for realisation. That the Cubists did not altogether achieve their desire does not detract from the importance of their departure from established precedent. Their reaction was a salutary event in the evolution of modern painting. The field of art was being overrun by the decadents of Impressionism and Cézanne, by the imitators of Toulouse-Lautrec and Degas, by those academicians who follow in the wake of every movement long after its methods have been accepted as vital. These scholastic men were incorporating spots and bright colours into their school-room drawings when Cubism came forward. By its unequivocal expression of opinions and by its neat delimitations of planes it has revealed the futility and pettiness of academic alterations. Besides their purely psychological innovations the Cubists have achieved all the ambitions of the academies in a way so net, so sure, so precise, that they have reduced the school, if not to silence, at least to ineffectualness. No longer can the admirers of scholastic art stand before a canvas exclaiming on the feeling, the atmosphere or the spirituality of the work. One must now use concrete terms and speak of those qualities which have to do

with profound order; for although the theories of Cubism state one thing, the application of them has taken another and definite æsthetic form. In the Cubists' work lies their greatest importance. We may without loss lay aside their explanations, their manifestos and the reports of their lectures.

The idea of synthesis in painting had been so thoroughly assimilated through familiarity with successive movements that, with the advent of Cubism, it was an accepted and unquestioned law of painting. Synthesis had in fact become an almost unconscious knowledge. Ingres, Daumier, Manet, Seurat and Matisse had, in quick succession, proclaimed its value in eliminating the unimportant and unessential from models. With Cubism, as with Matisse and Gauguin, synthesis was the supreme ambition — synthesis which had for its goal the artistic consistency of all the picture's qualities. Subject-matter, colour and the method of expression were all harmonised in Gauguin: with him the synthesis was illustrative. In Matisse it manifested itself in the reduction of form and colour to their simplest and most personal expression, and was therefore a step toward a pure art. With Picasso synthesis went still further. It became almost basic. We know that the curved line stands for life, colour and movement; that the straight line represents the dead, the sombre and the static. A solid dark is conducive to peace, while quickly succeeding light and dark promote liveliness. Bearing these fundamental postulates in mind we can easily analyse Picasso's quality of synthesis. The straight line which predominates in Cubism repudiates colour: — the Cubists were not colourists. The curved

line, when profoundly comprehended, expresses movement and fluidity; when used haphazardly mere prettiness results. There are seldom any curves in Cubism, and then only for relieving the monotony, for the sake of ornament. In the Cubists' scintillating succession of darks and lights, like a photographic negative of a Cézanne or an early Renoir, there is an unescapable feminine prettiness in which the twinkling of tone serves the same purpose as pretty colour. By their straight lines, subfuse tones and rigid forms, on the one hand, they achieve immobility. By their lights and darks, their curves and their dependence on nature, on the other hand, they reveal their emotional kinship to the illustrative schools of Whistler, Fragonard and Tiepolo. Now when we combine properly these two widely separated aspects of art — the one almost Egyptian and the other almost English — we obtain a combination of temperamental characteristics capable of the greatest achievements, for we have brought about the coalition of the purely masculine and the purely feminine. In Cubism, however, these two aspects are mingled disproportionately. The static predominates. The pretty is merely superimposed because of temperamental dictation: instead of functioning, it only attracts. But though in Cubism we do not find the perfect fusion of these creative sex impulses, the simultaneous presence of the two elements produces nevertheless a fundamental synthesis.

In order to bring about the greatest art, the form and order (which constitute the masculine side) must be all-pervading. Objective ornament and external beauty (which constitute the femi-

nine side) must be only the inspiration to creation. This is an important principle, for all art, like all life, falls into either the masculine or the feminine category. All personal preferences for certain forms of art are imputable to the predomination of the male or the female in the individual. Necessarily all creation is to a certain extent masculine — in it there has to be order; and by the predomination of the male or female is meant simply the accentuation of one of these qualities in their relative combination in each of the sexes. For instance, should the feminine "predominate" in a man, the fact would merely indicate that the percentage of femininity in his bisexuality had overbalanced the normal ratio. Decoration, which is an ornamental art, is feminine, and it will appeal to men who have a subnormal amount of the creator in them. The colossally ordered art of a Rubens will be understood and enjoyed only by one highly capable of creation, for in the contemplation and comprehension of a profound work of art the spectator reconstructs the artist's mind after his own formula, and thus recreates the work for himself. That side of art which is the recording of some emotion the artist has experienced so intensely that it demands concrete expression, is feminine. It is merely an overflow of receptivity into objectivity. To the contrary, when great art is produced it is not dependent on a specific exterior impulse. It grows abstractly out of a collection of assimilated impressions. When the will dominates the expression, these impressions must take plastic form. The desire to create is in itself feminine. The constructive ability is masculine. The first desire always is to decorate and beautify,

but the masculine will dictates and rules the expression. In feminine art the will to co-ordinate is absent. Consequently the expression is only the direct result of the reception. The Cubists realise that the will must play a large part in painting, but they exert their will on the analysis of thought rather than on their actual productions. The result is that, while their expression is highly restrained and reasoned, the will is exercised only on the emotion of the received impression, and is not manifested on their canvases' surface. In all their work they are decorators first and significant artists afterward. They belong distinctly to the lighter side of artistic tradition. They are the lyric poets of the plastic.

This is markedly true of Picasso who instigated the movement. When he first came to Paris he threw himself into a style of painting which recalled Steinlen at his best. From Steinlen he went to Toulouse-Lautrec and Impressionistic colour. Next he did carefully drawn portraits which proclaimed him a greater Gauguin. Later he become infatuated with the rhythm and skeleton-like creations of El Greco. It was at this period that he began to do his significant work. His pictures for the most part were painted in blue. They were sensitive to a high degree, and were, in the sculptural sense, sometimes ordered into a solid block form. Then, adopting a reddish colour gamut, he began to create full figures of nudes, portraits and animal studies. At this time he commenced his research in precise form. He organised copies of negro sculpture of which he had heard much from Matisse, and it was a result of his studying these rigid figures that

FEMME À LA MANDOLINE PICASSO

angularities began to creep into his art. Other artists set to work along the same lines, and from the friction of ideas which followed the theory of Cubism was evolved. Picasso's still-lives then became more precise, more hard-cut, more personal, more completely ordered. It is from this period we receive some of his greatest work.

Shortly after came the Cubist theory of simultaneity. The authorship of this theory is in doubt. There has been much controversy as to whether it originated with Picasso or with one of his followers. But it was straightway adopted by the entire group and made one of the dominating principles of the movement. Simultaneity to these painters meant the combined presentation of a number of aspects of the same object from many different angles. In the visualisation of an object in nature during the absence of that object, we conceive it, not only as a silhouette or as a form with three dimensions, but as a congeries of silhouettes which, when imagined simultaneously, constitute the appearance of the object from every known angle. In short, our minds envelop it and all its attributes at the same instant. Such a vision is the result of collected and concentrated memory. In a desire to disarm criticism the Cubists offered as a theory the picturisation of this multilateral vision; but in reality it was little more than an excuse to make the utilisation of natural forms more arbitrary than in the case of Matisse, Cézanne and Gauguin and also to rid themselves entirely of the illustrative obstacle. Their ingrained weakness lay in that they did not possess sufficient genius to alienate themselves entirely from document and

to create new abstract compositions. Nor did their instinct permit them to throw document aside when they sensed their inability to replace it with something more vital. Their spirit of revolution worked on the form which illustration would take, rather than on the discontinuance of illustration. But even in this attitude they marked a decided progress, for while in the paintings of their predecessors the disposition of line and form had made a unity of many separated figures, these figures, even to a mind unusually free from the taint of anecdote and objectivity in art, presented themselves separately as integers of a whole. The Cubists, by breaking up a model into parts which separately bore little resemblance to nature, proved that they not only recognised the demands of pure organisation but that they knew those demands could never be met so long as there were recognisable objects in a painting.

The presentation of a nude or a landscape from many different viewpoints was in itself no more important than the methods of the Impressionists. Indeed the pleasure derived from so constructing a picture is similar to the pleasure derived from copying light. It represents the nearest approach of the enthusiastic painter of form to the enthusiastic painter of light. They are both interested in recording a rather puzzling and interesting phenomenon: the one is after that which creates the impressions of form; the other, that which creates the impressions of colour. Both, in the broad sense, derive the same enjoyment in deciphering the work after it is finished. The one records only broad waves of scintillating colours

with no demarcation of silhouettes; and these colours gradually resolve themselves into a sunny and ambiguous landscape. The other makes a number of broad planes of brown and white which, when diligently studied in their parts, become the angular representation of water, ships, sky-lines which run into and through houses, trees which obscure near-by objects, and houses which melt into distant skies. Both schools of painting are impressionistic; each treats of exactly what the other neglects. No artist as yet has seen the distinct advantage of uniting the two methods. Cézanne might be suggested as having approached this alliance, but his means were too profound for him to be led into portraying by concrete symbols his impressions of a model.

In painting the enveloping mental vision of a model, however, the Cubists actually failed in the synchronism for which they strove. In reality they extended the effect of their pictures into time more than ever before. To grasp their illustrative import, long and arduous search must be made. While their canvases present a simultaneous vision, each picture as a whole is incapable of creating a unified impression. A Cubist painting is, let us say, like the momentary blare of a hundred musical instruments all of which play consecutive bars. By approaching each performer in order and studying his particular notes, until every musical detail is learned, we might intellectually construct from our memory an impression of a related musical composition. But should the blare be repeated, even after our research, the music's meaning would be no clearer than before. On the other hand, if, having first heard the com-

position in its natural development, we had studied its parts and motifs and then heard it repeated sequentially, a greater enjoyment and comprehension would result. In breaking up nature, either for the sake of extending the æsthetic appreciation into time like music, or for simultaneity of presentation, all the parts must answer to an organisation; — in the first case, so that, after the spectator's first fleeting vision of the whole, his eye will be carried from one part to another by the rhythmic balance of volume, linear opposition and harmony of colour; and in the second case, so that the canvas will be an interdependent block-manifestation.

In constructing formal planes with definite tones whose values are mechanical and absolute, the Cubists have missed that possible subjectivity of movement which, in its highest degree, colour alone can give. They have constructed only primitively ordered bas-reliefs each plane and line of which has a distinct direction. And this direction, no matter what is added to or subtracted from the work, will remain the same. The planes are consequently static and absolute. In the great art of Cézanne there is only a relative absolutism. By any alteration in one of his pictures, the entirety is shattered: the direction of each plane and line is changed to concur with the needs of a different order. This is because Cézanne's work possesses the poise which is demanded in the highest art. And this poise is what Cubism, with its rigid lines and planes, has entirely missed. Illustratively the Cubists' conception was new, compositionally it was old; and an art cannot be significantly renovated save from the bottom

upward. The foundation of all art is composition, and the only means which can be accepted as vital are those which increase the artist's power to express that which is more inherent in painting than in any of the other arts, namely: rhythmic form in three dimensions. That the Cubists failed to develop such means may be perceived by comparing the compositions of Picasso's "red" period, which were but slightly cubic and which contain a certain amount of arbitrary form, with his late and wholly cubic black-and-white drawings and paintings such as are seen at Kahnweiler's back of the Madeleine. The latter are almost wholly flat. His Femme à la Mandoline marks the transition from the early period to the late one. In all his pictures one finds a charming rhythm of lights and darks and a slight comprehension of surface form. But he never goes very deep. Even in his sculptured heads, while there is order, there is no form in the compositional sense.

To ascribe Picasso's Cubism to so childish an impulse as a desire to square an academic drawing is both untrue and unjust. Some have pointed to Dürer as his artistic forbear merely because Dürer once described a number of curves which he said could be made into a human body and drew a block-diagram of box-like forms which he said was the basis for the body's construction. But no relationship exists between these two artists. Cubism's first consideration was to cover the surfaces of its canvases with form, thus doing away with the empty spaces so prevalent in all art works, spaces which Cézanne left blank. To accomplish this logically it was necessary either

to introduce superfluous figures, or to stretch the ones already present into impossible distortions. Since the elimination of all unessentials was the keynote of the day, Picasso decided to make multiplex his essentials. Herewith was born the Cubist conception of breaking up the model for the attainment of a more complete work and one in which there would be no dead planes. At first an extensive linear direction, which started at the lower frame, was carried up into the background by the demarcation of a shadow or an object, for the purpose of holding tightly together two or more forms. Later, in order to facilitate this procedure of multiplying their models, the Cubists began to walk round them. This process unchained them from the slavery to a single model and from the given contour of an absolute subject. At the same time it permitted them a fantastically arbitrary composition, and made their expression more dependent on the personality of the artist, and less contingent on preconceived ideas, than ever before.

Cubism expressed a laudable tendency toward an aristocratic vision as opposed to the popular vision of reality. Its pictures therefore became doubly complex, for in the contemplation of the picturisation of our mental process, another process is started which is far more complicated than the first. Herein we have an explanation for the fact that Cubism is incomprehensible to the untutored person who regards art as an imitation of nature. The very word "form" is æsthetically meaningless to the average spectator. In order to experience its meaning, aside from organisation, one's attention has to be given over

to the object's weight, its force, its circumferential volume. A form in a picture cannot be considered merely as to its employment and its utilitarian destiny, or from the standpoint of one's experience with it. To the great artist an object exists as a volume with which to fill a given space. He completely forgets its *raison d'être* in life, and views it only as a means for tightening a picture's order. To this extreme of pure artistic conception the Cubists never attained. And while Cézanne advanced from Courbet's surface realism to the realism of causes, the Cubists were unable to progress along similar lines. They simply translated abstraction into terms of concrete expression. The profound reasons for dynamism in art were left untouched by them. They endeavoured to portray objectively an abstract process, expecting its mere portrayal to be dynamic.

The dynamic, however, cannot be rendered by imitation. It is as impossible of attainment by this method as in the dancing-girl canvases of Degas. Behind the emotional power of nature there is a great abstract force; and the effect of dynamism can be got only when this force is expressed. Then the result is a natural outgrowth of a cause. Otherwise we have only a detached effect which does not lead us back into the undercurrents of causation. When a Cubist picture is interesting it will at most make us puzzle over the application of its theories; it can never move us æsthetically by the sheer power of its methods. The one dynamic element which the Cubists have in common with Cézanne — namely: the modification of lines and forms through

contact with other lines and forms — they have nullified by constructing with rigid tones the planes which the lines delimit, thereby making their planes frozen and immovable. Because ignorant of the functionality of colour the Cubists were unable to present, at one and the same time, perfect mobility, planar solidity and indefinite depth. As a result of too much study of Cézanne's and El Greco's composition and too little study of Michelangelo and Rubens, they failed to achieve, even with the great arbitrariness and convenience of their means, a profound composition which is a rhythmic order of volume, as distinguished from a simple organisation of parts. Their accomplishments do not realise the promises of their programme because their theories were too inflexible. Cubism was too tightly bound by rigid systems and methods to produce plastically significant results.

The Cubists' greatest *apport* to art (not in theory but in achievement) is their almost total abolition of the painter's slavery to nature. It was but a step from Matisse to the complete elimination of recognisable objects, and though Cubism did not cover the entire distance, it nevertheless made an advance toward that pure expression which Cézanne saw was inevitable. Even today the followers of this school are beginning to realise their early mistakes and to throw off their self-imposed restrictions. They are launching forth into colour and are seeking expression in purely arbitrary form. But these new developments have not yet been productive of a new artistic worth. Indeed, it is doubtful if they will lead to important results so long as

the geometrical phase of Cubism is adhered to, and so long as the Cubists ignore the dynamic possibilities of colour. In its present status Cubism can only continue striving toward a style that goes deeper than tonal prettiness and lyric immobility. Already Picasso has passed out of painting altogether. An artist with his extraordinary gift to do anything superficially well could not remain anchored to an idea after the novelty of its method had worn off. He is not a man who is the slave of thought, but rather an obstinate artist with a spark of genius who has passed through many different stages with a rapidity born of astounding dexterity and cleverness. Many of his early female heads rival in sheer classic beauty the best of the Renaissance painters. Some of his pen-and-ink drawings are the most sensitive of modern times. There are caricatures done by him which closely approach the fantasy of a Goya. Indeed it may be justly said that he is as great an illustrator as Raphael. And in this analogy lie both his glory and his limitation. Like Raphael he lacks that profound penetration of exteriors which would permit him a comprehension of his greater influences — of El Greco, for instance. But, with a glance, he can sound the depths of a Toulouse-Lautrec, a Steinlen or a piece of negro sculpture.

Picasso's inability to conceive two elements at once and to construct a complicated development of composition, is exemplified in his earlier work, first, by his adherence to certain single colours at different stages of his career, secondly, by the extreme simplicity of his circus folk, and thirdly, by his figure compositions which, though they

are never tedious or dull and possess an almost nervous *sensibilité*, are limited to one or two human forms. Again Picasso's limitation of compositional conception is attested to by his stubborn use of brown and white in his latest Cubist pictures, by his employment of line alone in the drawings of his architectural-plan stage, and by his application of objects at hand to the clay blocks which mark his latest metamorphosis. But no matter what his medium or style, he remains essentially unchanged. In all his work is felt the superficial lightness of one who conceives order only as an ornament to decoration and who is interested in three-dimensional form merely as an after-thought. His sculpture is but his painting in a solider medium. It is broken up into planes and organised as to each contour in exactly the same manner as is his work in oils. The difference between Picasso, the sculptor, and Matisse, the sculptor, is the difference between a man who has a slight genius for rhythm and a block order, and one who has a slight genius for characterisation and a perfect ensemble. The art of Picasso, having to do with form as decoration, is admirably adapted to sculpture. The art of Matisse, being flat and dealing with colour as decoration, is inexpressible in clay.

Fernand Léger, with the exception of Picasso, is the most genuinely talented artist of the Cubist movement. His work at first was much less radical than that of his confrères and gave greater evidence of depth because it had never completely shaken off perspective. His canvases, Les Toits and Maisons et Fumées, represent

FUMEUR ET PAYSAGE — LÉGER

little more than a highly artistic angularisation of a subject which, being angular in itself, lends itself admirably to Cubistic treatment. Léger's method is to place in the foreground large planes which serve as a frame for the actual picture which is seen between them as through a tunnel. By this device he creates a diversity of form and with it a recognisable depth. His paint at first was light in tone, but is now taking on colour. Since his first Cubist exhibits he has made a logical progress in rhythmic conception, and if his past development can be assumed as a criterion of the future it is safe to prophesy that eventually he will be the most significant man of the original group. Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, Marcel Duchamp, Georges Braque and Francis Picabia are all prominent figures in the Cubist movement. Gleizes manifested his first Cubist tendencies by giving form a solid angularity, thereby making it precise. His canvases are devoid of interest because so slightly creative. His well-known L'Homme au Balcon appears to us today almost Futuristic in conception. In fact, it was exposed at the *Salon d'Automne* in 1912 one year after the Futurist show; and when we compare it with his early and less significant Les Baigneuses, with which it was hung, it gives the impression of having been the result of a sudden and enthusiastic inspiration from the newer men. Later his work grew broader and simpler, but in it there is little or no composition. Even the order is that of the straight line. Metzinger is a better artist. In him is a greater order, although, as in Gleizes, it is produced by the straight line. During his

artistic beginnings he was under the sway of negro sculpture and painted in small planes of light and dark. Later, turning from the influence of negro antiquity, he directed his talent on nature and began to interpret form into angularities. His La Femme au Cheval, done in 1912, was a distinct step, both as to form and composition, in advance of the naturalistic vision; and his Le Port is one of the finest examples of the Cubist theory of synchronous picturisation and interpenetrating lines and masses. Duchamp, a slighter talent than either Léger or Gleizes, is the Whistler of the movement. In his pictures are less form, less composition and less comprehension of volume than in any other Cubist work except that of Juan Gris whose lethargic canvases have not even the interest of an Aimé Morot. Braque has added nothing to Cubism. He followed Picasso closely, and his whole creative impetus seems derived from the latter's canvases.

Picabia, despite his popularity, is but a second-rate Cubist. He was quick to grasp the fact that the Cubists were working away from illustration, and attempted to step beyond them. Where they had endeavoured to bring about the precise stylisation of form, he merely dealt in ribbon-like patches of colour which were without contour, shape, proportion or volume. His canvases wherein many of these strange amorphous hachures are grouped, have a highly bizarre appearance but are only remotely intelligible. He used almost monochromatic schemes, as did his master Picasso, and continued this style of work until his fellow Cubists, by diligent research and serious study, had approached the abstract

appearance of his surfaces. Picabia then found a new impetus in the works of the Futurists — an impetus toward movement expressed, not by bodies, but by line. This Futurist influence resulted in his making flat pictures of many sharply defined silhouettes tinted red, green, blue and grey. His lines serve only to accentuate the chaos of his ensemble, for in his work there is no definite conception of the whole.

Cubism's possibilities as a dynamic illustrative art have never been adequately exhausted, and, since the angular mode is rapidly disappearing as a result of newer and more vital visions, they probably never will. Picasso was its high priest up to two years ago, at which time colour, coming back on the wave of a counter-revolution, threw most of the Cubists into its application. Robert Delaunay was responsible for this reaction. Early in 1912 he came forward with a very large canvas entitled Ville de Paris, whose surface was broken up into many angular planes after the Cubist fashion. But instead of depicting forms and formal relations, the picture was painted in greys and high colours solely as a means of surface filling. Its contours recalled El Greco despite their being disguised by triangular dislocations. The picture represented three mammoth Graces standing before a distant Paris landscape, and so transparent and ethereal was it that it seemed as though a breath could have dispersed it into mist. It possessed the delicate loveliness of a butterfly, and the eye, in running over its glittering and pretty array of colours, was fascinated as in the contemplation of a kaleidoscope. But the canvas, while provoking a

distinct visual pleasure, failed to arouse any æsthetic enjoyment.

Delaunay's L'Équipe de Cardiff the following year was equally unemotional. Fundamentally this picture was the same as his Ville de Paris, though treated differently as to surface. The same up-shooting type of *svelte* beauty as formerly bodied forth in his three Graces was here repeated in the bodies of the athletes, but there was in addition a very slight surface rhythm; and the colour, because its application was broader, had a greater fascination. In his Ville de Paris, not daring to paint a naturally drawn nude with the colours his sense of prettiness and ornament dictated, he fragmentised the surface by luxating the lines. Thus, while the sensitive contour was retained, the picture appeared as if viewed through a polygonal prism. In the second canvas this artifice for the sake of charm was discarded. The players were dressed in solid colours of bright pigment; the sky was blue-violet; the Eiffel tower, eminently appreciable, stood to the right; down the centre of the canvas was a large *affiche* in yellow; and overhead soared an aeroplane. The transition from a hackneyed theme to a modern one was the result of the artist's desire to pass beyond the methods of the day to more vigorous ones.

Before Delaunay's decisive work was done he had been influenced by the Neo-Impressionists, Cézanne, the Cubists and, in his two mentioned early works, by the Impressionists. Indeed these pictures are the expression of Impressionist methods broadened and extended to suit the dimensions of his canvases. His cityscapes with

the Eiffel tower as the principal object are interesting though not profound, and such canvases as the Route de Laon and Les Tours are so dainty they seem breathed onto the canvas. He is essentially a decorator in that he works always in two dimensions. This surface quality enters into all art, but in itself it is never significant. Only when it is a *result* of ordered plasticity does it have power to move us. In Delaunay, however, there exists no fundamental order. Consequently his power is strictly limited. His desire is to make decoration which will be profound, instead of profound composition which will result in decoration. By thus reversing the natural order, effects are considered before causes; and only by the dynamism of causes can we be made to feel beauty. Beauty such as his is merely prettiness: it is only the objective mask of beauty, and is of no more æsthetic importance than a view of nature. The true beauty of a work of art is subjective; it is the effect of one's having sensed the accumulated and sequential aspects of co-ordinated expression. Herein lies the difference between æsthetic emotion and the pleasure aroused by a sunset, a stage setting or a dramatic story. When one is able to penetrate finally into art, neither dolour nor depression results, but always a feeling of exultation and joy, for by one's intellectual comprehension one has been physically aroused by a dynamic force, not merely moved by a scene or story which sets in motion the associative processes.

To the inadequate comprehension of this psychological truth is attributable the failure of the Cubists and of Delaunay. The latter strove to

preserve the individuality of his work under the name of Orphism, and later under the designation of Simultaneism. But his temperamental kinship to Picasso and the Cubists is too obvious to be denied by nomenclature. Even his latest work, while more abstract and more luminous, is at most secessionistic. His canvas hung in the *Salon des Indépendants* in 1914 was Cubism translated into light colours and twisted into curves and circles. Delaunay's wife, Madame Delaunay-Terk, follows him closely in inspiration and application, but her pictures are less ordered than his. The American, Bruce, once an imitator of Matisse and later of Cézanne, has joined the Simultaneist ranks; and Frost, another American, is an ardent disciple of Delaunay. The orthodox Cubists had passed colour by, but its reappearance in the Orphists-Simultaneists was a significant augury. Though it was not understood by them as an element capable of organic functioning, its mere presence was an inspiration and a call to all genuine artists to penetrate its meaning in relation to the intensification of form.

XII

FUTURISM

THE dramatic enhancement of painting by line so well understood by the ancients, and the literary intensification of subject-matter by colour foreshadowed by the primitives and made more conscious by Delacroix, reached their highest development in the theories of Kandinsky and the Futurists. With Delacroix's comments concerning the harmonising of line and colour with subject and Seurat's and Signac's subsequent addenda to these comments, began scientific observation in painting. So long as these theories remained secondary to the great truths of composition they were admissible, because they had to do only with the unimportant ornamentation of an æsthetic organisation. But when, as in Kandinsky and the Futurists, they became the all in all of the artist's ambitions, they ceased to produce painting, and gave birth only to bad music, as in the Russian, and to bad poetry, as in the Italians. But while the Futurists' work had little to commend it to the discriminating spectator, their ideas were interesting and inspiring, and it is from their manifestos that has come what little influence they have exerted. Their pictures are neither pretty nor agreeable, while Kandinsky's, to the contrary, possess dainty

and pleasing traits. In both cases the pictures are puzzles to be deciphered at length: they are expressions of moods brought about by half veiling reality and by making symbolically concrete an abstract force or cause.

In music where the form is an abstract result of concrete causes and in literature where the form is wholly abstract and represented by symbols, moods can be easily expressed, for they are the natural outgrowth of the media of these two arts. But in painting and sculpture, which are the visual arts wherein the form itself is concrete, emotion can be provoked only by a plastic poise of subjective weights. The balance and opposition of such weights or volumes when rhythmically organised give rise to complete æsthetic satisfaction and engender a feeling of finality which encompasses both line and colour. The Futurists, as did Delacroix and Seurat, count on "force-lines" to express an emotion, thereby branding themselves two-dimensional artists. And their desire to represent an emotion of objectivity on canvas places them at once in the ranks of illustrators. The highest art has nothing to do with objective reality whether as a spectacle or as a means to sensation. It is true that painting, in becoming pure, will eventually incorporate the associative emotions, but these emotions will be the psychological results of abstract form, not memorial experiences produced by cognitive objects. And the line, of which we have heard so much, will then become a direction and equality of pure form; it will no longer be simply an indication on a flat surface by means of a mark. The Futurists did not

strive for purity. Rather did they emphasise an irrelevant side of painting. They declared themselves the renovators of subject-matter. Their whole ambition worked toward that end; and it is from that standpoint they must be judged.

In arriving at their conclusions many necessities of æsthetic emotion were sensed. Their most important statement, and one which, because of the dearth of significant art criticism, had not previously been set down, is that the person who contemplates a picture should not feel himself a mere observer of the events taking place in the painted work, but one of the principal actors in the canvas. In illustration such empathy is impossible unless the work is wholly and ultimately synthesised as to volume, colour, line, direction, size and subject. No such work has ever been produced because all the dramatic uses of these elements have never been understood by one man. That there are hundreds of canvases which entrain us into their ramifications is indisputable, but the æsthetic emotion we feel in them has to do with formal line alone, not with the perfect concord of line, form and subject. Marinetti and his group have striven earnestly to accomplish this difficult feat, but in every instance have failed. The explanation of their theories has far more to do with the emotion their pictures arouse in us, than has the actual application of these theories to canvas. They state that perpendicular, undulating and worn-out lines attached to hollow bodies express languor and discouragement; that confused, somersaulting lines, straight or curved, confounded into suggested gestures of appeal or haste, express the

chaotic agitation of sentiments; that horizontal, jerky lines which brutally cut into semi-obscured faces, and bits of broken, irregular landscape give us the sensation of one departing on a journey. But while all this may be true, it has nothing to do with the æsthetic emotion which in painting grows entirely out of the dynamic use of the elements inherent in that art.

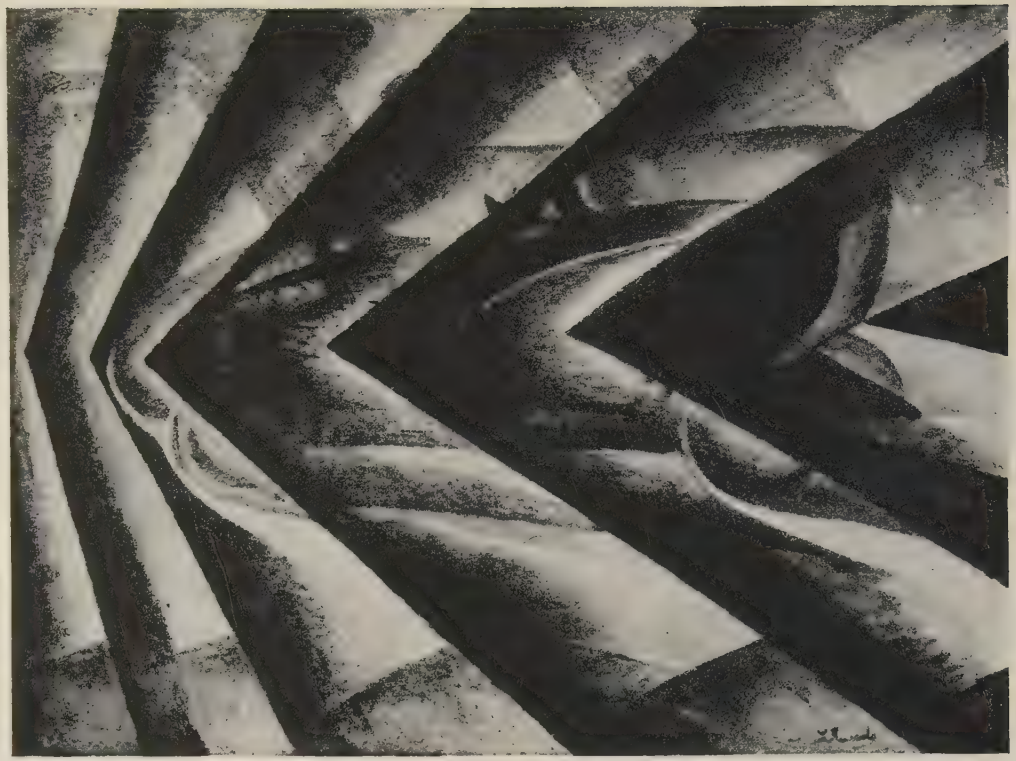
The desire of many modern painters and theorists to introduce into their own art emotions derived from the other arts results, first, from the modern ambition to intensify each of the arts, and secondly, from certain observations in æsthetic fundamentals, which have led artists little by little toward a vague realisation that the basis of all the arts is identical. But in this synthesis of the arts there is nothing new. The Futurists, in attempting to fuse poetry and painting, are many decades too late to lay claim to originality. Numerous attempts — all of them failures — have been made along similar lines. Wagner's was the most conspicuous. Then there were Sadikichi Hartmann, Madame Mary Hallock, René de Ghil, Arthur Rimbaud and recently Alexander Scriabine, all of whom commingled the different arts in an attempt to produce intensity. Commendable as these efforts for a hybrid expression may be, they are a futile expenditure of energy until the arts have been more precisely understood; and it is worth noting that those who have tried to coalesce them have been, in nearly every instance, the ones who understand none of them profoundly. The Futurists prove no exception. Their misapprehension of painting is analogous to that of Degas who, in picturing

the dance, imagined that the spectator, by contemplating its static representations, would experience its rhythm.

The emotion of movement which the Futurists wish to call up can never be produced by disordered and tumbling lines. The effect is chaos. Movement grows out of the placement and displacement of volumes. It is a result of rhythmic organisation. We are conscious of movement in a human body when a position or pose is shifted, and we are conscious of it *only during the process of shifting.* Should we look at a body in one position, close our eyes during its change of attitude, and then behold it completely altered, we should not experience a sensation of action at all. But if the static points of movement present themselves to us with sufficient rapidity they produce the effect of continuous movement, as in the simulacra of the kinematograph. Otherwise we record merely the result of the change of position — not the act of changing itself. In a Michelangelo statue we see at first glance only a solid rigid mass; but the moment we begin mentally to reconstruct the form, we sense the opposition of volume-direction and the delicate poise of weights which overhang hollows and which are proportionally exaggerated in order to give a greater emotion of struggling forces. Then, our will guiding our eye, the mind translates to us physically the statue's expansion and contraction, the withheld completion of absolute balance, the approximation to equilibrium: and it is only after we have passed through discords and struggles and complicated developments — in other words, after we have

striven for physical completion — that the finality comes as a satisfying consummation, like the knowledge of a tremendous task, long laboured over, brought to perfect and final accomplishment.

Is not the desire for an emotion, so completely reflective of the very undercurrents of life's forces, worthier of an artist's aim than the desire for the momentary sensation that someone is going away or that one is looking on at a dance? The emotional depictions of such episodes are at best but remote reflexes of reality. Our participation in a dance, for instance, is infinitely more intense than the Futurists' kinematic representation of it. In the actual experience one not only sees chaos but can touch the swirling forms, blink at the lights, smell the perfumes and hear the noise and music. In other words, one is moved to sensation or feeling by the physical forces themselves. To the true artist these physical forces are only his weapons, never his ends. And it is only through their intelligent use in the production of form that æsthetic emotion results. The superficial portrayal of effects, whether mental or physical, can never lead us inward to their causes. Any result is simply the dead end of a force, like the sea-weed a submarine volcano has thrown to the surface of the ocean. Art, being the causative force itself, should bring about the upheaval whose final manifestation is complete and satisfying. In great painting the spectator is led through every step of kinetic energy from chaos to order. When he emerges he has undergone a colossal dynamic experience. After all, energy is the ultimate physical reality.



DYNAMISME D'UNE AUTO — RUSSOLO

The Futurists, it is true, strove sedulously for dynamism. Several of the titles of their later canvases contain the word. But their consistent misinterpretation of Leibniz's doctrine led them into the most superficial statements of the laws of force. By confusing action with movement and tempo with rhythm, and by constantly juggling causes and effects, they never arrived at a basic exposition of energy. In contemplating their pictures we experience only visual confusion. There is no movement because there is no static foil, no consummation. There is no dynamism because there is no suggestion of the inherent force which all substance involves. Let us assume the hypothesis that it is possible to photograph a kinematic force in movement. The Futurists' pictures wherein the representation of dynamism is attempted, as in Dynamisme d'une Auto, there is a series of these hypothetical photographs each of which has caught a segment of immobility, as any snap-shot catches some static pose of a moving object. By superimposing each of these images successively on the other the Futurists imagine that a state of action is created. But even were this the case the picture would be innocent of dynamism. Again, Futurism claims not to paint maladies but their symptoms and results. Admittedly therefore it works against its own gropings for dynamism, for symptoms and results are the outgrowth of causes, and as such can have only an objective interest. Would the Futurists maintain, for instance, that, by portraying a head from many viewpoints on the same canvas, they can give us the emotion of a head turning?

Even were it possible thus to extend the contemplation of pictures into time, the effect of a series of dissimilar profiles would be no more convincing than that obtained by a slowly moving cinematograph film. Should we grant that by such a device the effect of movement resulted, it would depend entirely upon which end of the movement the eye alighted first whether the head moved one way or the other. And if the picture was a perfect organisation the change of direction would throw every part of the canvas out of gear.

Considering Futurism purely from the standpoint of illustration we still are unable to justify its aims. In painting a picture of a person setting forth upon a journey from a railway station, the Futurist represents the departure by means of horizontal, fleeting and jerky lines, half-hidden profiles, the station's interior, the engine, etc. Then by introducing into the canvas bits of landscape and other incidentals which depict the thoughts of the person about to depart, the artist endeavours to call up the same mental state in the spectator of the canvas. The associative process of the human mind, however, makes such a proceeding unnecessary, because in beholding a simple, even an academically pictured, scene of someone entering a train amid the confusion and haste of passengers and guards, the spectator involuntarily calls up the landscape running past, the telegraph poles jerking by, the clanging of the bell, the shouts of attendants, the shuffling of many feet and the hiss of steam. In setting these things down the Futurists succeed only in limiting a highly

imaginative person's thoughts by restricted visions of objectivity, just as in the theatre a producer, by placing many *papier maché* trees and rocks and fibre grass about the stage, circumscribes the onlooker's imagination. The Greeks, whose theatrical presentations were sufficiently intense to evoke an imaginative *milieu*, did not need factitious properties: but the theatrical Belascos must necessarily make their settings absolute and meticulously realistic. A Tintoretto needs no such tricks to strengthen its emotive power; but the Futurists, unable to move us by dynamic canvases, need recourse to dramatic tricks. At most their pictures could be significant only as auxiliaries to literary texts.

The Futurists' contention that all modern art should have as a point of departure an entirely modern sensation is wholly tenable, but they mistake the fact that a modern sensation is merely the sensation which pertains specially to the contemporary man. It has nothing to do innately with the delineation of an automobile or an aeroplane. The modern æsthetic spirit goes deeper. It implies the expression of an emotion by use of the latest refinements and researches in the medium of an art. In painting it is not limited to the illustrative portrayal of a novelty. Were this the case any painter who confined himself to the picturisation of the latest dreadnaughts and the highest skyscrapers would be the pioneer of a new expression. In order to express himself in a modern manner, an artist needs only to have divested himself of all predilections for antiquity, to have subdued all conscious desire to will himself into the bodies of

an ancient people, and to have seen the error of the childish maxim that there is nothing new under the sun. Any painter free from tradition, with a comprehension of æsthetic movement and an ability to apply it, will produce canvases which, though they have no radical theory behind them, will be as distinctly modern as those of the Futurists. Modernity has to do with methods and mental attitude. It is in no wise related to subject-matter.

Consider, for instance, the famous Futurist statement that "a running horse has not four legs, but twenty." Then contemplate Balla's picture, Dog and Person in Movement, to which this theory is applied. Neither the dog nor the person seems to move at all. They are static figures with blurred triangles resembling lace where their legs should be. Such a juvenile artifice to give the effect of movement is certainly not modern or even novel. Long prior to the Futurists, caricaturists and comic journalistic draughtsmen sought to express action by placing circular lines round the wagging tails of dogs or by drawing long sweeping lines behind a swiftly moving figure to indicate from what direction it had come and the rapidity of locomotion. Such inventions are outside the field of æsthetics. They have to do only with slow optical action. But the modification of objects in contact with others, of which Cézanne wrote, is a profound postulate of organisation. It creates a poise of volume which causes us to experience an emotion of movement. The Futurists' contrivance of endowing a horse with twenty legs precludes any possibility of their

calling up forcibly a running horse, for only the legs seem to move, as of a horse in a treadmill. Save for the pictorial side of a picture so presented there is nothing in it of interest to us: and our memory of an actual horse clashes with the vision of a multipedalian one.

The Futurists' statement, however, that a picture's lines should subjectively drag the spectator into the centre of the canvas, where he will personally experience the rhythmic interplay of forms, is not only pertinent but expresses an absolute æsthetic necessity. Pictures which do not so affect the beholder have failed as great art. But though the Futurists were the first to give succinct utterance to this shibboleth, the practice of constituting a work of art so that the spectator was transposed into its stress and strain, had been going on ever since great composition came into painting. One cannot study a Michelangelo or a Rubens without feeling, even to the point of physical fatigue, the struggle of their finally harmonised volumes. This does not hold true of the Futurists' work. In studying their pictures our eyes alone become tired; and, though we succeed in unravelling the involutions of their pictures, there is for us no recompense of emotional satisfaction. Action in itself has little charm for us, and action is what the paintings of Futurism, in their ultimate expression, are founded on. But while action may attract us when expressed by an interesting and sympathetic personality, as in the paintings of Henri and in the sculpture of Rude, there is in Futurism no actional sensation or explicit element of deep enjoyment that we cannot obtain in greater

intensity by gazing upon a busy thoroughfare, or by watching the landscape from a swiftly moving train, or by attending a dance. Even the chaos of a Futurist painting does not present the interest of the Flight Turning a Corner from Keion's panoramic roll of the Hogen Heiji war, or the prints of Moronobu, or even The Heavenly Host by the primitive Guariento. All these works, while they represent action, are also ordered. And order, which the Futurists lack, is more than an arbitrary ingredient in art. Just as the eternal desire in life is for something positive and absolute, so the attempt at order in painting is an outgrowth of the desire to make a picture complete and satisfying.

There is no doubt that the Futurists exerted much good in imbuing the artists of the day with a greater consciosity and in showing them, by an elaborate critical prospectus, the error of their ways. Futurism quieted the animadversions the modernist painters were hurling at Monet and his school, by pointing out that, to react against Impressionism by adopting pictorial laws which antedated it, was futile, and that the only way to combat it seriously was to surpass it. The Futurists, however, were unable to fulfil their proposition. They were, in fact, the abstract perpetuators of Impressionism through the Cubists who represented its formal side. The man who surpassed Impressionism was Cézanne. Furthermore, the Futurists chided the Cubists for painting from models, whether in squares, cubes or circles; and thus turned the light of analysis on the actual achievements, and away from the theories, of Picasso and his followers. The conse-

HIÉROGLYPHE DYNAMIQUE DU BAL TABARIN SEVERINI

quence was that for a short time the Cubists became somewhat Futuristic. Then, the strong impetus slowly ebbing out, the two schools gradually approached each other. Futurism has taken on a somewhat Cubistic mien; and the Cubists, having profited by the Futurists' teachings and having partially divorced themselves from the model, have begun to seek expression in Orphism and Synchromism. The work of Boccioni and Carrà has assumed a wholly abstract appearance, and is much more interesting than formerly.

The methods of Futurism have their provenience in many preceding art movements. One finds in this school's canvases cubes, spots, divisionistic technique and wholly academic drawing; some of the pictures are monotonously brown and grey, while others possess the acid colouring of Neo-Impressionism. But aside from their work the Futurists proved a salutary event in modern art. The painting of the day needed just such a cataclysm to turn its eyes from the contemplation of partial traits to a more encompassing vision. Their motto might be the saying of Mallarmé: "To name is to destroy, but to suggest is to create." Their art is largely one of suggestion. Their initial mistake was in supposing that the depiction of mental states would recall the causes of those states. Life would indeed be monotonous if in it there was no struggle. We could never appreciate its consummations were we ignorant of the travail which brought them about. The Futurists present, as it were, the conclusion of an oration in which has been developed a colossal thought, and ask us to applaud. This we cannot do, for not having

followed the struggle of the new idea against opposing forces, we are unable to appreciate the import of the results.

Notwithstanding their many failures the Futurists have greatly widened the field of illustration; by a word they have given birth to a school, Simultaneism; and they have forever turned Cubism from its narrow formalism. But in themselves they were not significant. They were too stringently literary, and in attempting to advance their own theories at the expense of profounder doctrines, they have succeeded only in assisting other painters toward a greater purity of expression, despite the fact that they advocated a retrogressive objectivity. Marinetti, a poet, is the spiritual (and monetary) father of Futurism; and the names signed to the original manifesto were Umberto Boccioni, a sculptor as well as a painter; Carlo D. Carrà, the most genuine artist of the group; Luigi Russolo, its most orthodox exponent; Gino Severini, its illustrator *par excellence;* and Giacomo Balla, its high priest of prettiness. In an attempt to preclude all censure, they closed their manifest with these words: "There will be those who will accuse our art of being cerebrally distorted and decadent. But we will answer simply that we are, to the contrary, the primitives of a new and centuple sensitivity, and that our art is drunk with spontaneity and power." With the slight change of "theory" for "art" we would heartily agree with them.

XIII

SYNCHROMISM

IN order to understand the last step in the evolution of present-day art methods, it is necessary to be thoroughly cognizant not only of what has taken place before but of the chronological development of all the qualities of modern painting, for Synchromism embraces every æsthetic aspiration from Delacroix and Turner to Cézanne and the Cubists. At the same time it reverts to the compositions of Rubens, complicating them further to satisfy the needs of the modern mind. Delacroix took the first decided step toward making colour an organic factor in art — a factor which would help present a more homogeneous emotion of the picture as a whole, and which would be intimately connected with the picture's vital expression. He was a decided advance on those painters to whom colour was as arbitrary a means of adorning a good work as the gilt frame they placed about it. Colour with them was dictated by the demands of an age of voluptuousness and unrestrained living. The great art nations of Spain, Italy and Flanders were then passing through a sensuous epoch, and the painters reflected in their work the tone of the national temperament. The primitives of these countries and of Germany had used colour because the religious qualities in their pictures

became more realistic when nature's general tints were employed. By making their work more dramatic they were able to set forth more forcibly the lesson they strove to teach. The art of the primitives was primarily dogmatic. In it was none of those subtleties of composition which come only with the conscious artist's delight in bringing order out of chaos: it contained only that simple and instinctive order which is the avoidance of chaos. That which the primitives had to say was so rudimentary and well-learned that it took a definite visional form in their minds. When dogmatism began to lose its charm for the painter his forms gradually became more suave, and his colour likewise grew gracious and ornamental. The lessons were forgotten, and composition as an element of first importance, dressed in a robe of rich and varied hue, supplanted them.

Such was the employment of colour at the advent of Delacroix whose probing mind sensed not only its importance as drama, but also its potentialities for brilliance. With him, however, it remained an adjunct to drawing — something to be applied when the rest of the picture had been laid in, an element with which to intensify the importance of subject. He gave a great and necessary impetus to its study, but he outlined no directions for its significant application: indeed, by following out his original concepts one is led into the impasse of Neo-Impressionism. But at so early a stage the impetus is the important thing, and to Delacroix belongs the credit for having set in motion the wheels of colour inquisition. It was Daumier, however, who, apparently ignoring it, brought its exclusive use appreciably

nearer. By conceiving contour and form as one, he disposed, as it were, of these two elements which, in the scale of pictorial importance, had always been placed before colour. Had each successive painter profited by all the *apports* and qualities of his direct predecessor's art, the progress of painting might have been more rapid, but it would never have been so perfect. Each painter would have inherited both the shortcomings and the merits of his forerunner. Thus one side of his art would have developed out of all proportion to the other. Daumier, going back to tone, discovered a wholly natural method for the achievement of intense form. His pictures present themselves as great bulks of flesh and matter, crude but vital, which have about them a force of actual weight. In nowise was he a colourist. He lived in a time when prettiness was the keynote of the day, and his whole life was a revolt against it. His reaction was so extreme that he disregarded the capabilities of colour.

The Impressionists, on the other hand, overemphasised its objective uses. They held that the colour seen in nature is all-important for picture making, and proceeded to copy it. As a result their work is highly emotional, but only in the same way that a sunny landscape is emotional. These artists were the slaves of nature, doing its bidding; Gauguin bent everything into the mould of his own personality: and it is only when these two types of creative impulse combine and modify each other that great naturalistic art is possible. The Impressionists, being receptive, believed all that nature openly proclaimed. They

unearthed none of its formal secrets; they probed none of its causes. Theirs was only the joy of the discoverer. But their insistence upon the discovery was important, because it helped give birth to Cézanne. He was a direct outgrowth of Impressionism, but he was also an outgrowth of art's entire history. Superficially he may seem more closely akin to Pissarro's school than to the older painters, since it was from Pissarro he learned his first colour lessons; but in reality he was more intimately related to a Giotto or a Rembrandt, because his knowledge of colour was used only to heighten the emotion of volume; and this volume, which Monet or Sisley would not have understood, was the chief concern of the old masters.

With the Impressionists colour was an end in itself. They looked upon it not merely as expressive of light, but as synonymous with light, whereas Cézanne, ignoring colour's dramatic possibilities, used it to express and intensify the fundamentals of organisation, just as Giotto, disregarding the dramatic possibilities of line, employed line as a means to ordinate volume. Cézanne is related to Daumier and Rembrandt in that while these men created their art (which was primarily one of tone) by building up volume simultaneously with contour, he created his art (which was primarily one of colour) by presenting his visions as nature presents itself to our eyes and intelligences, that is, as forms in which tone, contour and colour are inseparable. That he has been little understood is due to the fact that his profoundly logical methods took birth in an age of "inspirational" painting. Matisse who came later made

of Cézanne's still-lives a highly enjoyable decoration whose destiny can rise no higher than that of tasteful and complete ornament. Cézanne's art is dynamic, while Matisse's is exaltedly excitatory. The former bears the same relation to the latter that a Beethoven symphonic movement bears to a ballet by Delibes. One inspires thought: the other incites to action, to spontaneous admiration and joy. Matisse loves and knows colour in its harmonic relations. He and Gauguin, by the broad beauty of their work, have given an impetus toward large planes of pure pigment. In brief the evolution of colour is as follows: it was used first for verity; secondly, for ornament; thirdly, for drama; fourthly, for its inherent beauty as light; and last, for intensifying natural form.

All this has to do only with the concrete side of art's progress. There is also a progress of the mental attitude which is inseparable from art's concrete development and without which its material evolution could not have gone forward significantly. This mental progress resulted in the emancipation of the artist from the intellectual limitations of his public. Up to Géricault and Delacroix painting had idealised contemporary life, had held itself to the interpretation of biblical history, or had spoken in legend and allegory. It had expressed itself in the Italian mode of drawing; it had followed set rules of balance and chiaroscuro; and above all it had possessed a very definite finish. Naturally the art historians expected this style of painting to continue indefinitely. But with Delacroix it began to change. The hard contours grew freer. The depiction of the human form halted at approximation.

Drawing became more arbitrary. Then came Courbet who insisted that there was beauty in everything if one knew how to bring it forth. He turned to the commonplace life about him for inspiration, repudiated the suavities of David, the romance of Delacroix, the elegance of Velazquez and the colour of Veronese; and began to order realistic nature. About his name there grew up a tempest of adverse criticism; but no man so sure of his own genius as was Courbet could be weakened by public condemnation; and he made no compromise. Manet continued Courbet's freedom of selection and painted *n'importe quoi*. The Impressionists also carried forward this modern attitude. They sought for that which generally was considered ugly, and made it artistically enjoyable by drenching it with light and colour. Then came Cézanne, Matisse, the Cubists and the Futurists, with each of whom subject-matter became more and more emancipated. Natural objects gradually lost their importance and grew more abstract. Form was considered for its own sake, and models were not copied merely because they filled certain utilitarian destinies in the spectator's mind. Objects were used by Cézanne to create abstract ensembles. In Matisse the form itself became more purely æsthetic, though with him there was a residue of objectivity for the sake of illustrative consistency. With the Cubists natural form was an echo, a memory of life, retained because they were not sure of how to turn their minds away from it. Futurism attempted a rehabilitation of illustration, but lately it has been converted into a purer vision by the Cubists.

To sum up: colour reached its highest development in Cézanne; composition attained its highest intensity in Rubens; and the greatest freedom in material form was represented by the Cubists. Thus the art of painting stood in 1912. But at that time the development of modern means had not reached its highest point. The purification of painting had not been attained. The tendencies of the past century fell short of realisation. As yet there had been no abstract coalition of colour, form and composition. Colour had not been carried to its ultimate purity as a functioning element. Form had became almost unrecognisable but had just missed abstraction, its inevitable goal. And composition, the basis of all great art, had been temporarily abjured in the feverish search for new methods. The step from the condition of art in 1912 to its final purity, in which would be embodied all the qualities necessary to the greatest compositional painting, was not a long one, but until it was taken the cycle must remain incomplete. The last advance in modern methods was made by the Synchromists at *Der Neue Kunstsalon* of Munich in June, 1913. This movement was fathered by Morgan Russell and S. Macdonald-Wright, both of whom, though native Americans, were partially European in parentage and education. Russell is more than half French, and Macdonald-Wright, whose family name is Van Vranken, is directly descended from the Dutch.

Russell first studied in New York under Robert Henri, one of the most sincere and intelligent products of American art. There he acquired a sound and capable foundation for his later work

both in clay and paint. He then went to Paris, still feeling nature through the inspiration of Manet, and like Manet fell under the sway of Monet. From the Impressionists he was attracted to Matisse with whom he was personally acquainted. He did many canvases attractive in colour and competent as to form, as well as a number of synthetic and obviously disproportioned statues which recall the modern "Fauve" to a marked degree. Later he began to take an interest in Cézanne, and to his study of this master and of Michelangelo is attributable his later development in colour and composition. These men constituted his main influences; but in the course of his development he had cast a glance at Picasso and even at the Futurists; and it is a significant commentary on their methods that they are more susceptible of understanding than either Renoir or Matisse. Leo Stein, an astute and discerning connoisseur of the more modern art movements and a man who can see with occasional flashes of genius through the aspects of a canvas to its basic cause, no doubt had much to do with Russell's rapid intellectual progress through the discipleship of the student to the creation of individual endeavours.

Macdonald-Wright, to the contrary, had little art training in the accepted sense of the word. Primarily interested in the purely technical side of painting, as were Renoir, Cézanne and Courbet, he had been influenced first by Hals, Rembrandt and Velazquez and later by their successors, Manet and the Barbizon school. Hoping to find help in the schools he studied at many academies, but after a brief period retired to the seclusion of

his studio. About this time he began, with the aid of Chevreul, Helmholtz and Rood, to make experiments in colour in its relation to luminosity. Quite naturally the influence of Monet followed, and it was not until a year later that his enthusiasm for the Impressionists disappeared. He then began the construction of form by large and crude planes, building his figures with light and dark chromatic blocks. It was this broader application, coupled with his love of pure colour, that led him to an eager admiration for Gauguin. At this period of his development he met Russell, his senior by three years, to whom he has always admitted his debt for his early appreciation of Michelangelo as well as of the modern masters. From then on, through many struggles with light, he made rapid progress. When Futurism blinded the eyes of the younger men he went straight ahead in the path he had chosen.

Shortly after their meeting, Russell and Macdonald-Wright reached the end of their appreciative and formative period of imitation. They were both too intensely desirous of self-expression in its broadest and most precise sense to vary an already well-learned precept or theory. They were colourists, and had been even when passing through their most sombre stage. Now both turned to colour as to a longed-for goal. The art world at that time was being flooded with the mournful browns and whites of Cubism; and Matisse was too slight an inspiration to attract them, for they had consistently conceived form in three dimensions. Their desire was to create canvases of richly harmonious colour; but the difficulty lay in finding a new method of applica-

tion. Neither of them was content merely to place suites of pure hues on the canvas, as an end in themselves. This would be to sacrifice organised volume for an ephemeral pleasure. Colour must have a formal and compositional significance, otherwise it would be but shallow decoration. The fact that, like all painters of the day, they were still bound to the depiction of natural objects, added difficulty to the solution of their problem. Their individual interpretation of Cézanne, however, little by little showed them the method by which they might eventually open the door on their desires. Russell approached form through light, combining both qualities in a simultaneous vision. Macdonald-Wright approached light through form, regarding them as an inseparable and inevitable unity. Both painters expressed their vision in the purest gamut of colour which painting up to that time had seen. Colour with them became the totality of art, the one element by which every quality of a canvas was to be expressed. Even their lines were obtained by the differentiation of colours in the same way that tempo delimits sound.

Russell began his Synchromism by extending and completing the methods of the Impressionists who had observed that one always has an illusion of violet in shadows when the sunlight is yellow, and who in their painting represented the full force of light as yellow, and its opposite extreme of shadow as violet. Russell, in observing that the strong force of light gives us a sensation of yellow and that shadow produces its complementary of violet, went further and discovered that quarter and half tones also possess colours by

which they can be interpreted. He thus arrived at a complete colour interpretation of the degrees of light forces or tones. This method he aptly called the orchestration of tones from black to white. For it he made no hard and set rules. From the first it was a highly plastic and arbitrary manner of depicting objectivity. By modulating from light to dark (from yellow to violet) not only was light conceived forcibly, but form resulted naturally and inevitably. This was the principle by which Cézanne, although he did not completely grasp its import, achieved his eternal light which brought form into being. But the principle with him was subjugated to the influence of local colours, varying *milieu*, reflections, etc. Russell stated the principle frankly and applied it purely. Since his form at that period resulted from a sensitive depiction of light values expressed by colour, his canvases had much the same beauty of strongly lighted natural objects seen through the three-sided prism by which the transition from tone to colour is automatically brought about.

Macdonald-Wright approached his conception of Synchromism from the opposite direction. He had always been dissatisfied with the endless alternation of small shadows and lights which the Impressionists had introduced into painting, and with the tiny planes and spots which artists used for verisimilitude. He desired a method whereby the elements of shadow and light could be differentiated and drawn together in simple masses. He had studied pure colour more from the standpoint of form than from that of light, and during 1912 began to take note of the fluctuations of

colours, their mobility when juxtaposed with other colours, their densities and transparencies. In fine, he recorded their inherent tendency to express degrees of material consistency. Thus with him a yellow, instead of meaning an intense light, represented an advancing plane, and a blue, while having all the sensation of shadow about it, receded to an infinity of subjective depth. The relative spacial extension of all the other colours was then determined, and a series of colour scales was drawn up which gave not only the sensation of light and dark but also the sensation of perspective. Thus it was possible to obtain any degree of depth by the use of colour alone, for all the intermediate steps from extreme projection to extreme recession were expressible by means of certain tones and pure hues.

The first Synchromist canvas was exposed by Russell in the *Salon des Indépendants* early in the spring of 1913. It was called Synchromie en Vert and recorded a large interior in which all the light forces were treated in their purely emotional phases. The canvas lacked the complete visualisation and the solid space-construction which characterise his later work, and furthermore it revealed many traces of the academic composition. However, had there been critics possessed of artistic prescience they straightway would have sensed in it a new force in painting. But the picture's defects obscured their recognition of its potential vitality. This was due in part to the fact that the work lost much of its effect by piece-painting, that is, by the minute treatment of details each of which constituted an end in itself regardless of the total. Russell counted on the

line of the different bodies holding it together; but he reckoned falsely, for if, in a work where colour is so important a part of line, the colour and line are not in complete harmony, the line alone is inadequate to effect the liaison of forms. In this same *Salon* Macdonald-Wright, not yet having arrived at a defined conception, exposed two canvases in which his later developments were but vaguely foreshadowed. Both pictures were formal compositions of nude figures painted in three or four flat planes of pure colour, and recalled Matisse and Cézanne more strongly than they presented a new vision. From the standpoint of efficient visualisation all three Synchromist works were failures, or at least they were indications of incomplete progress. In Russell's canvas the diminutive breaking up of colour negatived what otherwise would have been the picture's brilliant effect; and Macdonald-Wright's large application of colour served only to place him under the banner of an established school. But both men realised that this was only a start, and set diligently to work on the canvases for their first exhibition which was booked in Munich for June of that year.

Between their first pictures and those of a few months later there was to be noted an advance both in conception and in application. Russell's small colour planes, applied wholly from the standpoint of light, expanded and took on a new effectiveness. His form became more abstract, and his colour more harmonious. Also his compositions were more compact, though they were ordered rather than rhythmically organised. Macdonald-Wright's progress was similar. In an

interpretation of one of Michelangelo's Slaves, used as the dominant form in an arrangement of three figures, all the academism which had marked his earlier expression had disappeared. His method had been liberated from the exactitudes of static principles, and had become consistent, not with the new colour knowledge, but within itself. The theory of defined colour gamuts, which from the first had been applied by these two men, had now become a scientific principle. Though the truth of it had always been vaguely sensed by them, it had not become a definitely comprehended formula until they had worked out the naturalistic laws governing colour. The Synchromist pictures in which these laws were boldly applied were first brought together at 13, Prannerstrasse, Munich, in June, 1913.

In November of the same year their work was again exposed, this time at the Bernheim-Jeune galleries in Paris. The show in Munich, widely advertised by coloured posters, had attracted considerable interest, but in Paris the exhibition created a two-weeks' sensation. Though the more discriminating critics saw its importance, there was considerable adverse comment due largely to the Synchromists' spectacular and over-enthusiastic methods of putting forward their views and discoveries. In their two specifically worded prospectuses they devoted much space to the shortcomings of Orphism, then in vogue; and although their criticisms of that school, coupled with the statement of their own tangible and logical aims, had much to do with Orphism's demise, the impropriety of the attack created a feeling antagonistic to the new men. The appear-

ance of their pictures was entirely different from any paintings hitherto exposed; and their conception, while being a normal and direct outgrowth of Cézanne, marked a revolution in formal construction. The inspiration of both these new artists was classic in that they recognised the absolute need of organisation which, if it was not melodiously and sequentially composed, should at least be rhythmic. Both were striving to create a pure art — one which would express itself with the means alone inherent in that art, as music expresses itself by means of circumscribed sound.

There was no precedent for purely abstract form — that is, form which has no antitype in nature — any more than there was a precedent for the construction of painting solely by means of colour and line. This was not due to an absence of desire in the artist for an abstract language of form, but to a natural diffidence on his part to break once and for all with centuries of tradition, and with one imperious gesture to cast aside the accepted *raison d'être* of the visual arts. We have seen how form from the first had been an imitation of natural objects, how it dedeveloped into synthesis, then into pure composition, how it reached a high degree of arbitrariness in Matisse, how it disintegrated in Cubism, and how in Futurism and Orphism there was a valiant attempt to convert it once more into pictorialism, to check its *élan* toward perfect freedom of creation. It is not therefore strange that the Synchromist exhibition should have comprised, with the exception of one canvas, figure pieces, studies of landscape and still-lives (some almost archaic

in their direct and simple statement), and not canvases which abandoned all semblance to natural form. Russell and Macdonald-Wright were still occupied tentatively in expressing the forms they knew best, each by his own individual method. But despite this compromise with tradition their exhibition presented a highly novel impression. There were human figures distorted almost out of recognition for the compositional needs of the canvas and painted in bars of pure colour; still-lives which seemed to be afire with chromatic brilliance; fantastic fruits; life-sized male figures in pure yellow-orange; and mountains of intense reds and purples, warm greens and violets. All the pictures, however, displayed decided organisational ability, and they possessed a more complete harmony of colour and line than had been achieved by any of the other younger painters.

But that quality of Synchromism which struck the discerning spectator more than any other was the force of volume resulting from the relationship of colours. For years painters had realised that certain colours when applied to certain forms rebelled at the combination, that they refused to remain passively on the planes assigned them. But this phenomenon had never been given any penetrating study. The more sensitive painters had merely changed their colours to more tractable ones, and had thus avoided the inevitable conflict that followed the fallacious commingling of two highly affirmative elements. Such chromatic inconsistencies should have taught artists the necessity of harmony for the sake of perfect order; but the matter was left to personal instinct. The clash between colour and form, however, was

not due to any error or idiosyncrasy of taste, but to the absolute character of each separate hue which demanded, for its formal affinity, a fixed and unalterable spacial extension. At an early date artists had recognised that blue and violet were cool and mournful colours, and that yellow and orange were warm and joyful ones. They applied this primitive discovery with the feeble results to be found in Neo-Impressionism. That these colours had any further character they never suspected. Their insight extended only to the emotional and associative characteristics of the colours; the physical side was overlooked. Had the painters been more scientifically minded they would have known that these characteristics, which were the feminine traits, could not have existed in isolation; and they would have searched for the colours' dominating and directing properties which represented the masculine traits. Such a search would have led them to the meaning of colours in relation to volumes, that is, to colours' formal vibrations which alone are capable of expressing plastic fullness.

This vibratory quality Macdonald-Wright found and applied. By it he achieved light and shadow which resulted naturally by the juxtaposition of warm and cold colours. Russell, working altogether from the standpoint of light as revealed by form, attained practically the same results so long as his light came from the direction of the spectator, for in such a case the highest illumination was the most intense salient and, as with Macdonald-Wright, had therefore to be painted with a warm and highly opaque colour. But where the light came from a source at right angles

to the line of vision, the expression reverted to an intensification of the Impressionistic method. Later this accident of light disappeared from Russell's work, and consequently his treatment became less restricted. This setting aside of light as the motif was a necessary departure, for when Russell carried his work into the higher elements of pure form, a realistic source of illumination would have made his suites of abstract volumes appear, not poised and relatively solid, but as pateræ attached to an impenetrable substance. Under such conditions painting would merely be another and perhaps more beautiful way of making effective the ordonnances of surface form. But it would have no more power to create in us an æsthetic emotion than an exquisitely composed bas-relief.

The ambitions of the Synchromists went deeper. They desired to express, by means of colour, form which would be as complete and as simple as a Michelangelo drawing, and which would give subjectively the same emotion of form that the Renaissance master gives objectively. They wished to create images of such logical structure that the imagination would experience their unrecognisable reality in the same way our eyes experience the recognisable realities of life. They strove to bring about a new and hitherto unperceived reality which would be as definite and moving as the commonplace realities of every day, in short, to find an abstract statement for life itself by the use of forms which had no definable aspects. The Synchromists' chief technical method of obtaining this abstract equivalent for materiality was to make use of the inherent and absolute

SYNCHROMIE COSMIQUE MORGAN RUSSELL

movement of colours toward and away from the spectator, by placing colours on forms in exact accord with the propensities of those colours to approach or recede from the eye. The Futurists had spoken of drawing the spectator into the centre of the picture, there to struggle with the principals of the work. They failed in this ambition because their canvases lacked the intense tactility of volume. The Synchromists, by making the enjoyment of form purely subjective, and by expressing form both by objectivity of line and the subjectivity of colour, achieved the ambition of both the Futurists and Cézanne. The latter's desire was ever toward a pure and subjective art. Although his colour viewed objectively is much like the Impressionists', the pleasure of the Impressionistic vision disappears when the eye is satisfied, whereas our emotions begin to work on a Cézanne only after the visual enjoyment has run its course.

Where Cézanne obtained a block solidity by the intelligent addition of local colour to light and by the subtraction of light from local colour, the Synchromists reject all local colour and paint only with hues which express the desired form. The position of a given volume in space dictates to them the colour with which it is to be painted. Consequently a receding volume whose position is behind the other volumes is never painted a pure yellow, for that colour advances toward the spectator's eye; and a solid volume which projects further than the others is never painted violet, for violet expresses not solidity but a quality of space, something intangible and translucent. All colours and tones and admixtures are answerable

to the law of natural placement. This law is not absolute; it does not anchor each colour at a specific and unchangeable distance from the eye, but it determines the relative position of colours in space according to the influence of environmental colours, thereby making their position both dependent and directing but none the less inevitable. The perfecting of this principle by the Synchromists introduced an added element of poise and a new emotion in painting — poise, because, by changing a line or a colour, the formal solid constructed by interdependent hues would shift and adopt another position answering to the needs of the new order: — a new emotion, because colour in all painting before Cézanne had been used for ornament or for the dramatic reinforcement of the drawing or subject, and in Cézanne colour had been employed to express subjectively the emotions of volumes found in nature.

In Synchromism, which was first inspired by natural forms, all considerations other than light forces (as with Russell) and form (as with Macdonald-Wright) and composition (as used by both) were abolished. Colour was made a functioning element out of which grew all the qualities of the pictures. At first, adverse criticisms were aimed at the Synchromists' polychromatic nudes, still-lives and landscapes. The press remarked that the nudes appeared as if adorned in Harlequin suits; the landscapes, as if they were intended for theatre drops; and the still-lives, as if painted through a prism. The Synchromists answered that, in order to achieve a strong emotion of force and weight, they would "will-

ingly sacrifice the lovely tints of the flesh and the joy of searching for coloured pots in the shops of the second-hand merchants." But, despite all they could say, there was justice in the public's criticism. So long as there was a natural form in a picture, the spectator would unconsciously judge it from a naturalistic standpoint. To be sure, there were canvases in the Munich exhibition which were almost unrecognisable as nature; but, before the aims of this new movement could be fully attained, a style of arbitrary and pure form was necessary. In the Bernheim-Jeune show Russell exposed one wholly abstract canvas. As an indication of a deflection toward pure composition, it was important, but the picture itself was as manifestly an artistic failure as had been his first large Synchromie en Vert hung in the *Salon des Indépendants* of that year. It was not the only failure exposed, however. From the point of view of complete and organised conception all the early Synchromist pictures were to a certain extent fragmentary and tentative. The large canvas by Macdonald-Wright, Synchromie en Bleu, was a flagrant example of a totally new vision unsuccessfully struggling with the objectively classic inspiration of a defunct antiquity. The group of three males in its foreground, while competently and intelligently built, had the appearance of allegorical figures struggling against a toppling world. Although their position and organisation were dictated by the needs of an almost El Greco-like composition, one was too conscious of natural objects to accept, with a clear æsthetic conscience, the seeming chaos of the elements.

In bringing together in a unified emotion all the impressions of form, the Synchromists at first overlooked the fact that purity of expression, in order to be highly potent, must embody a pure conception. Their early canvases demonstrated many new formal possibilities, but, while they were composed more compactly than those of the other moderns, the forms themselves were obviously naturalistic. Herein the Synchromists at their début failed to take the step from Cézanne to abstraction. Cézanne conceived all nature's qualities — form, colour and tone — simultaneously. He was the first great realist, because nature dictated to him the colour he was to use. The Synchromists, on the other hand, used natural objects to create organisations of pure colour, thus making formal expression a wholly subjective performance. This method contained greater emotional potentialities than Cézanne's, because where the latter's palette was necessarily much subdued in order to approximate to the attenuated gamut found in nature, the Synchromists' palette was keyed to its highest pitch of saturation. Cézanne's choice of colour was never absolute in the harmonic sense, because he depended for accuracy entirely on taste and sensitivity. With Macdonald-Wright and Russell the palette was completely and scientifically rationalised so that one could strike a chord upon it as surely and as swiftly as on the keyboard of a piano: the element of hazard in harmony was eliminated. This knowledge of colour gamuts was not employed for ornamental niceties, but was converted into a method of creating an æsthetic finality other than that of form and line.

If, in a complete balance of line and volume, the colour overweighs at any point into warm or cold, the poise of the whole is jeopardised and the finality obscured. The perfect poise of all the elements of a painting, expressed by the single element of colour, is the final technical aim of Synchromism.

In the first arbitrary formal composition by Russell the desire was to carry out the continuations of form from one chosen generating colour and at the same time to create linear development as well. His compositional theory was that, through the inevitable evolution of line from an arbitrarily chosen centre, the artist would naturally and consciously create form which would definitely approximate to the human body. In his Synchromie en Bleu Violacé the composition was very similar to that of the famous Michelangelo Slave whose left arm is raised above the head and whose right hand rests on the breast. The picture contained the same movement as the statue, and had a simpler ordonnance of linear directions; but, save in a general way, it bore no resemblance to the human form. The sketch for this canvas was a greater success than the final presentation, for its realisation was more complete, its order more contracted and intense. In both there was but one very simple rhythm with two movements; and the size of the large picture, which was twelve feet high, was incommensurate with the slightness of the expression.

His second large Synchromie, exposed in the *Salon des Indépendants* in March 1914, was more complicated and more sensitively organised, both as to movement and to colour, than his first.

By his colour rhythms he strove to incorporate into his painting the quality of duration: that is, he sought to have his picture develop into time like music. The ambition was commendable although he wrongly asserted that older painting extends itself strictly into space. A Rubens, while presenting itself to the spectator at one glance, is nevertheless more than a block-manifestation of forms, for it never reveals itself fully until after many periods of study. In the old painters there is a definite formal foundation on which the canvas is rhythmically built, and as a rule this formal figure is repeated in miniature many times throughout the canvas. These form-echoes are defined and complete linear orders, and into them rhythm is introduced. In Russell the process is reversed: with him the rhythm brings about the order. In Rubens there is a distinct and conscious development of line, but no development of form. Russell, in his later canvases, sets down a central form which dictates both the continuity of the picture and its formal complications. His generating centre is not like a motif whose character imprints itself on all its developments, but rather like a seed out of which the different forms grow — a directing centre which inspires and orders its environment. In fine, the surrounding forms are not a development of the central one, but a result of it. This type of composition corresponds to the melodic composition in music.

In the later works of Macdonald-Wright the motif form of composition is achieved. In Cézanne there are forms whose parallels are repeated in varied development throughout the work and

are rhythmically ordered into blocks. But while these forms resemble motif repetition, they are not generated by rhythm but united by it. In Macdonald-Wright's canvases the rhythmic continua of a central form constitute the movement of the picture as well as the final character of it. In his Arm Organisation in Blue-Green one can discern near the centre a small and arbitrary interpretation of the constructional form of the human arm. The movement of these forms throws off other lines and forms which, through many variations and counter-statements, reconstruct the arm in a larger way. Again these lines of the larger arm, in conjunction with the lines of the smaller one, evoke a further set of forms which break into parts each of which is a continuation or a restatement of the original arm motif, varied and developed.

Macdonald-Wright holds that the forms which we have experienced in our contact with nature are more expressive and diverse than those which are born of the inventive intelligence. But, while it is true that every realisation of *æsthetic movement* or of the *rhythm* of form is based on the movement of the human body, it is not true that the human body is a necessary foundation for form alone. However, Macdonald-Wright, in interpreting the human form, makes use merely of the direction and counterpoise of volume; he does not indulge in the depiction of limbs and torso: the body is only his inspiration to abstraction. He changes and shifts its forms out of any superficial resemblance to nature. In his desire to cling to a solid and immutable foundation we recognise an artist who realises how meagre is

the incentive to create abstract compositions. With centuries of tradition urging him to a realistic rendering of the life about him, he finds it difficult to break entirely with realism and to create without referring to materiality. Perhaps some day he will even forgo the inspiration found in the combined forms in nature. His work is tending toward that ultimate freedom, as also is Russell's.

Such a development, however, cannot be definitely predicted, but one can say, without dogmatism, that in the future their work will become surer, their compositions of a higher and more complete order. With their knowledge of the fundamentals of rhythmic organisation, which is well in advance of that of the other painters of today, their progress seems assured. Their postulates are too definite to permit of the introduction of literary or musical transcendentalism; and their *apports* are too significant to permit of any retrogression toward metaphysics or drama. Their palette has become co-ordinated and rationalised. Their composition is founded on the human body in movement. And their colour, in its plastic sense, takes into consideration space, light and form. These factors represent their technical assets. With these painters comes into being an art divorced from all the entanglements of photography, of piecemeal creation, of inharmonic gropings, of literature and of data hunting.

But they must not be regarded merely as inventors of new pictorial methods, for their discoveries have already taken significant æsthetic form. As Renoir completed the first cycle of modern art which was ushered in by Turner and

Delacroix, so have the Synchromists completed the cycle of which Cézanne is the archaic father. They have discovered the concrete means wherewith to bring about his desires. It remains now for the painters of today and of the future to realise more fully the dreams of a higher art history. With the Synchromists there is no system or method other than a purely personal one. The word Synchromism, adopted by them to avoid obnoxious classification under a foreign banner, means simply "with colour." It does not explain a mannerism or indicate a special trait, as do Cubism, Futurism and Neo-Impressionism. It is as open as the term musician. As a school it can never exist. Indeed it is the first graphic art the application of whose principles cannot be learned by a course of instruction. Artists employing its means must depend entirely on their own ability to create. In Synchromist pictures the good or bad results cannot be obscured by the introduction of foreign elements, as in the case of pictures wherein nature is copied. Russell and Macdonald-Wright have already repudiated the appellation of Synchromist and call themselves merely "painters," for, since Cézanne, painting means, not the art of tinting drawing or of correctly imitating natural objects, but the art which expresses itself only with the medium inherent in it — colour.

All significant painting to come must necessarily make use of Synchromist means, although form and composition — that is, the creative expression — may be as arbitrary or personal as the artist desires. In the Synchromists' latest prospectus are to be found the following com-

ments: "In our painting colour becomes the generating function. Painting being the art of colour, any quality of a picture not expressed by colour is not painting. An art whose ambition it is to be pure should express itself only with means inherent in that art. The relation of spacial emotions and of the emotions of density and transparency which we wish to express, dictates to us the colours most capable of transmitting these sensations to the spectator. In thus creating the subjective emotion of depth and rhythm we achieve the dreams of painters who talk of drawing the spectator into the centre of the picture; but instead of his being drawn there merely by intellectual processes he is enveloped in the picture by tactile sensation. We limit ourselves to the expression of plastic emotions. We can no longer conceive of the stupid juxtapositions of colours devoid of any rhythmic interlinking as art organisations." The Synchromists do not pretend to have invented new qualities for art but to have brought to painting a new vision which permits them to express the old qualities with a greater potency than formerly.

XIV

THE LESSER MODERNS

DECADENCE is simply the inability to create new tissue. In painting it manifests itself in two ways: either in the endeavour of an artist to turn the attention from new and precise procedures to antiquated and irrelevant ones; or in the artist's desire to base his inspiration on the great work of an immediate forerunner rather than on the foundation of all vitality, nature. In neither case is new material being added to the sum of art. Decadence usually takes the form of a facile imitation of the surface aspect of a master, not infrequently making that master's *results* prettier, more fluent and more attractive. This is a natural and inevitable consequence of copying the objective side of a great work which originally was the outgrowth of a profound æsthetic philosophy. Decadents, as a general rule, are sufficiently analytic to sense their own paucity of constructive genius. In recognising that nature can never inspire them to significant co-ordinations, they are content to accept, with slight modifications, the artistic standards of their predecessors. They vary the art that has gone before to meet the needs of their own temperaments. In many cases highly meritorious work results.

The word decadent is not wholly deprecatory. Often the decadent is a competent composer in the abstract. By presenting in an attractive way his own personal tastes, he sometimes makes his art both interesting and beautiful. His decadence lies in his retrogression from the point to which the art of his day has arrived and in his inability to introduce a new element to compensate for this retrogression. No amount of individuality can bridge this gap. Many painters, like Gauguin, have reacted against achievement but have possessed a tangential vitality which in itself has been a new contribution to æsthetic endeavour. Other painters, like Renoir, while introducing no innovations, have, by talented and comprehensive efforts, duplicated and improved upon the art of the latest creative masters and thereby pushed forward the highest standards. They are not decadents, for their work exhibits no deterioration. Even decadents may be excellent artists. Gaspar de Crayer was undoubtedly a great artist though an offshoot of Rubens; and Giampietrino and Cesare da Sesto were both solid and intelligent painters, though they did not rival their master, Leonardo da Vinci. There has undoubtedly been great sculpture since the Renaissance; but Michelangelo closed up for all time the plastic possibilities of clay and marble, and consequently, there being no new functioning element to be introduced into it, all sculpture since his day has been in the broad sense decadent.

Modern painting has had its decadents also — men who have attempted to revert to a sterile past or who have followed in the paths blazed

by others without approaching the achievements of the painters imitated. This latter class has its usages, for it tends to lend impetus to the movement it follows. The men composing it are popularly called exponents, and the appellation is just. There are painters in all countries today who adhere to Impressionist methods, and thereby keep ever before us one of the great steps in the development of modern painting. Cézanne has undoubtedly been given greater consideration because of the many artists who follow his precepts. And the numerous imitators of Cubism have done much to focus on that movement the consideration it deserves. In a general way all the lesser modern painters, by their feverish activities, expositions and pamphleteering, have, despite their inherent lack of genuine importance, kept the world conscious of the fact that it is in the midst of a great æsthetic upheaval, that new forces are at work, that the older order is being supplanted.

Today nearly every country has a group of men striving toward the new vision. They cannot all be innovators of new methods. They cannot all carry forward the evolution of modern painting. But they can at least give momentum to the current ideals and turn out work which bears so much personal merit that it becomes deserving of more or less serious consideration. Degas and his circle are of this class, as are the Futurists who, though at bottom decadent, inasmuch as they turn their art back to illustration, are a force which cannot be ignored. In Dresden, Munich and Berlin are groups of modern men who have repudiated the academies and struck

out into new fields. Russia has contributed many young artists to the present ideal. England has not been altogether impervious to the modern doctrines. America is represented by fully a score of artists animated by the new vitality. And in France there are a hundred painters at work tearing down the older idols. While few of these men can lay claim to introducing any intrinsically new and significant methods or forms into modern painting, their work in many instances, while being decadent in the strict sense, is nevertheless commendable. They are not great artists even in the sense that Monet, Manet, Gauguin, Matisse and Picasso are great; but many of them are at least genuine artists.

One of the most conspicuous figures among the decadents is Wassily Kandinsky. In an age when all art was being arraigned before the tribunal of biology, physiology, and psychology, he came forward and attempted to drag it back into the murky medium of metaphysics. The generating forces of modern painting, however, rest on no metaphysical hypothesis. To attempt to define form by transcendental terms, or even to credit form with esoteric significance, reveals an ignorance of the principles of æsthetic emotion. Form in the art sense is a demonstrable proposition; it is answerable to physical laws. Michelangelo, El Greco, Giotto, Rubens, Cézanne and Renoir based composition on natural causes, and as each successive artist has approached intensity in organisation, he has come nearer and nearer to the rhythm which animates and controls corporeal existence. Æsthetic form, in order to

become emotion-producing, must reflect the form which is most intimately associated with our sensitivities. It must primarily be physical. There is nothing mysterious about æsthetic rhythm, and any attempt to "spiritualise" the harmonies of art carries art so much further from the truth. The modern tendency to make objects abstract and to divest subject-matter of all its mimetic qualities, has led some critics and painters to the false conclusion that form itself is unrelated to recognisable phenomena. But even in the most abstract of the great painters, the form is concrete. In a broad sense it is susceptible of geometrical demonstration; and its intensity is in direct ratio to its proximation to human organisms. In fact, there are no moving forms in an æsthetic organisation which do not have their prototypes in the human body in action. Were this not true empathy would be impossible, and without empathy an artistic emotion is purely intellectual and associative. The greatest painters, past and present, have recognised this principle; and art which does not adhere to it is decadent both in the æsthetic and the intellectual sense.

Kandinsky exemplifies this kind of decadence. While the innovators up to Matisse had tried to discover in nature secrets which would aid them in plastic expression, Kandinsky has tried, by numerous articles and at least one complete book, to turn back the minds of painters to the supposedly mystical elements of form and colour. But although this artist is to be commended on his effort to make colour significant in a day when angular forms of brown and black were the

keynote, his study of colour should have begun where Cézanne left off and not with the writings of Maeterlinck and the symbolist poets. Kandinsky recognises that colour has possibilities, but he ignores the fact that colour is one of the physical sciences, as definite as those of the quadrivium, that its inductive qualities have become classified and that its functioning is precise and answerable to natural laws. Consequently he cannot co-ordinate its governing principles, and in an attempt to rationalise it he has sought refuge in music, an art which presents to him the same mystical difficulties. So long as he was under the healthy influence of Matisse his symbology was less evident; but when he adopted a metaphysical programme it all came to the surface.

Kandinsky's early "impressions" are heavy and insensitive "Fauve" pictures. His "compositions" for the most part are general statements of some rural scene in Matisse's manner; and his "improvisations" represent semi-abstract lines delimiting scientifically meaningless colours. In his book, The Art of Spiritual Harmony, he presents an elaborate explanation of the metaphysical basis for colour, but he fails to contribute any ideas not to be found in Delacroix and Seurat. And the pictures with which he complements the text have been surpassed, in their own manner, by the Chinese. There are isolated comments on colour theories which are separately sound, and there are explanatory generalisations; but a diligent search fails to reveal any statement which is precise and at the same time new. The book refers constantly to

COMPOSITION NO. 2

KANDINSKY

music, and there are undeniable evidences of literary thought; but nowhere is there an explanation of the plastic significance of colour. Kandinsky is a painter of moods, and as such encroaches upon the domain of music. He is a painter of the vision of an action without its objective integument, and as such he enters the realm of poetry. He is essentially pretty, and despite his idealistic nomenclature, he is at bottom illustrative and decorative. What he designates the "soul" is only associative memory, and his conception of composition is the breaking up of a flat surface into irregular compartments by lines and more or less pure colour. Like Scriabine he has overlooked the formal possibilities of colour and consequently has failed in any æsthetically emotional expression.

Kandinsky's attempts to create moods are largely failures because of the inherent limitations of his art medium. The arts may be synthesised when a profounder understanding of them has come about, but their functionality can never be interchanged. The art of literature will always be able to tell a story better than the greatest sculpture; and even a primitive song is more capable of producing a mood than the most highly organised painting. Kandinsky, for instance, fails to achieve what the Marseillaise achieves in music, namely: the dramatic presentation of an exortation to action. Separate, for instance, the phrases of the original version. The first verse opens with a rousing appeal which culminates on "*patrie*," a word always welcome to the ear and heart of a Frenchman. Then the song acclaims the glory of the occasion and

repeats dramatically the cause of the struggle — "*Contre nous de la tyrannie l'étendard sanglant est levé.*" Then it recounts the tragedies which are befalling relatives and friends at the hands of the growling soldiers of the enemy; and suddenly, in an unexpected voice it calls, "*Aux armes, citoyens!*" ending in a patriotic and decisive flourish. The music throughout is subtly harmonised with the words: lively during the opening call; abated during the first statement of the cause; animated with its repetition; minor when the tragic words occur; vibrant and imitative of bugles during the call to arms; and highest in pitch at the end. This is the expression of the mood intensified.

Could painting extend itself into time and present singly and in sequence the visions of objective nature, dramatically synthesised with colour and line, it could perhaps influence people to emotion in the way music does. But the musical quality of time-extension is impossible in painting. And since a picture presents a simultaneous vision, which cannot be otherwise except through a subjective process, it is incapable of working from a prelude to a finale like music. Music is abstract, though firmly based on the rhythmic movement of all nature, yet it can produce moods by far more distant and far less tangible associations than can painting. But mood in music is no higher a quality than illustration in painting, and the highly creative artists ignore them both. The great composer is the one who, seeing beyond the associative theory in music, feels the deeper plasticity of movement and form: and his plasticity is this only pre-

occupation, just as the plastic element of colour is the great modern painter's chief concern. Kandinsky has only tried to introduce an unimportant element of one art into another art. While the procedure has a superficial taste of novelty it is no more creditable than if he had declared himself frankly for illustration and joined the ranks of Degas and his school. He has not probed into the pregnant recesses of painting and attempted to discover the meaning of form. He has contented himself with obscuring the delineations of natural objects in such a manner that the beholder feels led to decipher his cryptic realities. The suggestion of actuality is there, but there being no other strong attraction in the picture, æsthetic or otherwise, the spectator sets to work to penetrate its objective meaning. In the majority of cases he succeeds, and gains thereby a satisfaction similar to that of having solved a simple problem in fractions.

In painting moods, which he refers to as "spiritual impressions," "internal harmonies," "psychic effects" and "soul vibrations," Kandinsky does not attempt to depict the dynamic forces which produce moods, but strives to interpret his own emotional impressions by means of semi-symbolic and semi-naturalistic visions and by inspirational methods. Unable to ally the elements of colour and line to a given theme, he contents himself with giving us a chaotic impression by such means as he personally associates with his mood: and since this kind of association is largely individual, his depiction of the mood is incomprehensible to anyone not temperamentally and mentally at one with him. Did he

understand the inherent psychological dramatic significance of colours and lines he could represent a universally moving vision, and thereby attain in a small degree the end for which he aims. But his feeling for colour especially is so vague and unscientific that it is, after all, a personal thing, and his graphic representation of a mood is little more than an individual and purely otiose expression. Even Carrà, in his colourless Funeral of the Anarchist Galli, approaches nearer the creation of a mood than does Kandinsky in his best canvases, for in Carrà there is exhibited a certain knowledge of the dramatic use of line which, when combined with recognisable subject-matter, augments the thematic drama.

Despite his complete preoccupation with colour Kandinsky is decadent more than Van Gogh to whom artistically he is closely related, because the progress of modern painting is toward purity, toward creation by means of a unique element, toward an art which expresses only the qualities of which that art is the most highly capable. When other considerations enter into it, it is at once drawn back toward illustration, and its final defecation is postponed. Happily Kandinsky, an explorer of the limitless realms of metaphysics, has given us no more specific a postulate than that colour has meaning. Though he formulates many vaguely associative theories (such as "keen yellow looks sour because it recalls the taste of a lemon," "a shade of red will cause pain or disgust through association with running blood," and "in the hierarchy of colours green is the *bourgeoisie* — self-satisfied, immovable, narrow"); he nevertheless relies largely on instinct for their

application. While attempting to turn painters' minds from the precise discoveries of colourists to a pseudo-philosophical consideration of colour, he is too general and ambiguous to inspire extensive imitation. Already painters since him have gone forward in the great work of research begun by the Impressionists.

If Kandinsky, as a theorist, is cabalistic and illusory, he achieves a certain decorative prettiness in his work. Though his ideas are old, the appearance of his canvases is new: and it is merely this novelty of conception, coupled with his tendency toward abstraction, which makes him of interest, and then only as a theoretical deviation from the work of Gauguin, Matisse and the Orientals. His colour is not without visual charm, and his composition often has the fascination of the delicate patterns found in the Chinese. In fact, Kandinsky's compositional debt to the Chinese is large. His Improvisation No. 29 is almost identical with a painting by Rin Teikei, and many of his pictures appear like curved-line generalisations of Chinese groupings, or the forms in Chinese backgrounds. Like the Cubists Kandinsky is a step toward arbitrariness in formal composition, but his advance is less significant than theirs. In his desire to illustrate a mood and produce a corresponding psychic emotion in the spectator he is a transcendentalised Futurist. His ontological terminology has given an impetus to his popularity, but it has tended unfortunately to obscure his worth as a maker of arabesques.

Of a different decadent type are Bonnard, Vuillard and K.-X. Roussel who call themselves the Intimists. These artists descend in large

measure from Matisse, and though other and sometimes stronger influences enter their work, they are in a general way more closely akin to him than any other modern painter. Their appearance is more academic and, in the decorative sense, prettier than that of Matisse. Also, there is in their pictures a greater perpendicularity than in the work of their master. The angular and the perpendicular always represent the second compositional step from symmetricality to order: they are indicative of the earliest stage of æsthetic consciousness. They are found in the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and in all the primitive Christians, and in Gauguin and Puvis de Chavannes. The artists who use them have awakened to the fact that chaos is not conducive to emotional satisfaction. In perpendicular lines there is a primitive sense of fitness, for one feels they are both well-planted and immovable. Not infrequently they are employed by the decadents of a movement or an epoch because they harmonise so neatly and unostentatiously with pretty colours and delicate themes. The Futurists found in them a ready means to a decorative order.

Bonnard, the most genuine artist of the group, uses perpendicularity of arrangement more consciously than does either of the others. He studied in the same class with Maurice Denis at the *Académie Julien*, and his association with this painter no doubt explains his compositional predilection. He is strongly influenced by Renoir, although he has never penetrated beyond Renoir's surface. His greys are always rich and sombre, and even his simplest works are as artistically opulent and lovely as the finest tapestry. Indeed

his large paintings are more appropriately wall coverings than panels, ornaments rather than decorations. In them are hot sunlight and cold shadow in scintillating succession; and every object is put to genuine ornamental use. They seem to exhibit an unconscious fluency in the employment of bafflingly diverse greys which are saturated with colour and applied so as to reveal highly their attentuated purity. There are also in his work harmoniously horizontal lines and pleasing sequences of curves. In Le Jardin a line starts with the head of a man on the left, continues along his arm and leg and the sofa back, and reaches an apex in the child's head to the right of the centre, sinks by way of the head of the woman on the right to the man's arm, is then caught up again by the contour of his legs, is paralleled by the outline of the nearest standing child's dress and face and the face of the kneeling girl, is continued in the bottom of the skirt of the child seated on the sofa, and then becomes horizontal in a perfect continuation of the table's surface. The line is beautiful and studiously made, and is pointed out here for the purpose of showing the simple ordonnance often found in the lesser artists. Nor is it the only line in the canvas. There are others as harmonious and as beautiful; but what keeps the picture from being a great composition, although its forms are solid and well adapted to their spaces, is its lack of opposition or solution of warring elements. If we do not try to class Bonnard with the greatest artists, we are forced to praise him. He is unpretentious, highly gifted, has a well-developed sense of the beautiful, and is possessed of a most

sensitive eye. He is neither an illustrator of nature nor of moods, but an artist who paints to obtain æsthetic expression, without the *arrière pensée* of a theoretical method. He is one of the most purely pleasing painters of modern times.

Vuillard, a painter of interiors, owes his inspiration as much to Toulouse-Lautrec as to Gauguin. Like Bonnard he uses greys of dry and mat colour, but his harmonies are slighter and of lighter tonality than those of Bonnard. Profiting by the Impressionists' light discoveries he has done some very admirable interiors; some of his works are more modern and artistic Whistlers. His art is one in which the spotting of masses for the sake of balance supplants any attempt to produce generating lines. As with Bonnard and Roussel there is in him a striving after beautiful surfaces, *matières* which in themselves will tempt the amateur. In this common pursuit the Intimists show themselves to be the successors of Degas; but they are successors who, having taken to heart the teachings of more significant forerunners, represent a sturdier decadence than that of Degas. K.-X. Roussel is a feminised Poussin. He searches solely for effect, and his canvases have the singular charm of enamel. Were they smaller they would make admirable brooches and vases. He too has made tapestries, but in spirit they are less modern than the corresponding efforts of his contemporaries. His compositions embody reddish satyrs and nymphs, intense blue sky, yellow-green foliage and yellow ground. His drawing never has more than the rudimentary charm of school-room talent, while that of Vuillard is subjugated to his colour application,

LE JARDIN BONNARD

and that of Bonnard is instinctively deformed to the needs of line and decorative necessity.

Maurice Denis is more directly an outcome of the school of Pont-Aven than are the three preceding men. His synthetic figures were first seen in Courbet, then in Puvis de Chavannes, then in Besnard and Gauguin. In Denis they have lost much of their significance and have once more become primarily academic. There was a time about 1890 when Denis's colour was not aggressively disagreeable. It was subjugated to a certain greyness which was applied in little spots resembling the black-and-white stippling of some of Seurat's drawings. Now his colour has grown acid and unpleasant. His line is stiff and vitiated and lacks even the quality of a pleasing silhouette. He has written a book of theories, but it has helped him little in his artistic achievements. He is the antithesis of Bonnard, and his colours possess almost no harmonious interrelation. In him there are a few perpendicular lines, but one may seek in vain for evidences of co-ordination. Many of his figures are appropriated from the works of the old masters, but because he fails to adapt them sensitively to his needs, they lose, rather than gain, in beauty by the transfer. He is at times symbolic and allegoric, and while one might overlook this literary phase of his art, provided there were other qualities to compensate for it, he fails to exhibit a complete appreciation of the æsthetic possibilities of his models, and consequently becomes merely an exponent of adopted mannerisms. His popularity has entirely to do with qualities unrelated to painting. Judged by a purely æsthetic standard he is inferior to an

Augustus John, a Desvallières, a Bourdelle or a Wyndham Lewis.

The highly talented André Derain is another synthetic painter. He is sincerely moved by multiramose tree forms and the sunlight effects of Provence, and his admiration for Cézanne led him into certain mannerisms which have for their object a facilitation of the Aix master's methods. In his use of soft yellows, hot earth tones, deep warm greens and light blues, he reveals his debt to the modern tendency toward colour. By outlining his objects with heavy contours, he has acquired erroneously a reputation for virility, and though he aspires to composition, he only achieves pattern. He is much like the Scandinavian, Othon Friesz, who, having absorbed the exteriors of Matisse and Cézanne, and having read Cézanne's letter recommending Poussin remade on nature, has turned his attention to this old Titian offshoot and endeavours to give us a reversion to style. At one time he used colour freely, but he now paints with ochres, blues, blacks, greens and an occasional red — a gamut like Derain's, only yellower. He too has a heavy technique and a reputation for virility. Maurice de Vlaminck is another painter of similar inspiration and palette. He is much prettier and has a finer sense of soft harmonies than either of the other two. He reveals a genuine feeling for his subjects, and always tries to introduce into his works a simple oppositional line. He comes direct from Cézanne, and it is from paintings such as his that Cézanne has acquired a reputation as a maker of arabesques. De Vlaminck has a rich and impelling *matière* and an art sense which is almost coquettish.

Kees van Dongen has studied the sensual drawings of Toulouse-Lautrec and the broad exteriors of Matisse, and in combining his two admirations has made eminently effective posters of nearly harmonious colours in very broad planes. De Segonzac also uses attenuated colours in a broad manner after Matisse. Manguin, another Matisse imitator, is too academic to appeal strongly to those who have acquired the modern vision, despite the primitive order his canvases at times possess. Flandrin is more decorative. His works reveal a classic perpendicularity of composition, and though they are without a sense of form, we feel in them a certain charm of space and air. He brushes in his landscapes broadly by planes of light and dark, somewhat in the very early manner of Matisse. Pierre Laprade has arrived at a style of surface which may best be characterised as bad tapestry. Jean Puy applies his pictures in a broad, somewhat bold, manner, and his light tonality and angularities point to his having lingered over the work of Cézanne. Lebasque is the feminine prototype of Puy. His colour is faded and unemotional, and his exteriors are as flat as the simplest decorations. Madame Marval differs from Labasque only in theme.

Modern decadence in Zak, Rousseau, Vallotton, Prendergast and Simon Bussy manifests itself in a retrogression to primitive ideals. Though using the modern methods of simplification, these men revert to a static and dead past. Their aim is to revive the most ancient manner of painting. Of all the modern decadents they are perhaps the most devitalising for they tacitly repudiate the

discoveries of the new men, and strive to turn the minds of the public and of painters alike to the sterilities of antiquity. They even ignore the æsthetic principles of the Renaissance, and by pushing creative expression to its furthest limits of artlessness, turn to naught the entire achievements of the great plastic composers. At best these men are dealers in decorative material. Simple arrangement is absent from their works, and colour, which for nearly a century has fought for its true place in painting, is once more used as an instinctive means for filling in drawings.

Vallotton, though a modern primitive, is not allied to any recent school. In appearance his work is unlike that of the other moderns. He disdains all save the simplest means and the most restricted colours. In him there are no delicate plays of light, but broad and heavy shadings which are not without subtlety. He is a Teutonic Ingres — a Flandrin made serious as to precision and reduced colour. At a distance his nude studies are interesting, for there one loses the dryness and hardness of their technical manner — a heritage of Vallotton's days of wood engravings. Other modern painters who elude classification, but who are intimately related in a general way to the new movements are Charles Guérin, Piot, Spiro, Alcide Le Beau, Gustave Jaulmes and d'Espagnat. Though they differ markedly from Vallotton they are all preoccupied with self-expression by means of colour. By making it a dominant element in their work, they have admitted their susceptibility to the modern ideal and thereby have given an impetus to the spirit which tends toward purification. Guérin is a

professor of the *Académie Moderne;* and though clinging close to conventional drawing, he attains a slightly novel aspect in all his tapestry-like canvases. He is eminently of the Beaux-Arts tradition, is artificial and monotonous, and paints very large pictures with both idealistic and realistic themes.

Of the modern men who have found in Cubism their strongest æsthetic fascination de la Fresnay is a noteworthy example. So well does he understand the demands of the Picasso tradition that he has come to be looked upon as one of the members of the Cubist group. His arrangements are soft and pretty and his colour is harmonious. He has in fact surpassed in merit several of the original Cubists. Frederick Etchells and W. Roberts are English exponents of Cubism, and the latter has done some work which rivals that of Picabia. Wyndham Lewis, another Englishman, strives for an individual expression, but his angularities reveal his debt to Picasso, although the general impression of his pictures is Futuristic. The hand of the Cubists can be found in many of the canvases of the modern Americans. Arthur B. Davies, the most popular of the new men in the United States, is at bottom a superficial academician, but he superimposes shallow Cubist traits on his two-dimensional drawings, giving them a spuriously modern appearance. Maurice Stern treats Gauguin themes with a pale reflection of the early geometrical Picasso; and similar means are employed by C. R. Sheeler, Jr., though both Matisse and Delaunay have contributed to his art.

To name all the modern painters who are con-

scientiously battling against formalism and the dry-rot of the academies would be impossible. The field is too broad: the activities are too numerous. Few civilised countries have escaped the insistence of the new impetus. By some painters the new methods are adopted tentatively and by degrees. Others fly to the latest phases of art and move forward with the epoch. Today there are numerous representatives of all the movements from Impressionism to Synchromism. Kroll and Childe Hassam, both Americans, are emulators of Monet, though Hassam, who appears less modern than Kroll, is by far the more sensitive painter. Marquet has done more than imitate Impressionism. He has synthesised Monet into a more masculine expression. His planes are broad and luminous, and he achieves a distinct feeling for air and distance by simpler and more direct means than did the Impressionists. W. S. Glackens combines a Renoir technique with a modern purity of colour. J. D. Ferguson, the Scotchman, also reverts to the Impressionists but has learned much from Matisse. Duncan Grant, an Englishman, is much more modern than Ferguson and more competently expressive of the new. Roger Fry has contributed much to the modern impetus. His writings reveal a wide comprehension of present-day paintings and his insight into æsthetics is at times profound. Every year adds to the ranks. Besides the modern artists already named may be mentioned Bechteiev, Bolz, Lhote, Chagall, Chamaillard, Zawadowsky, Hayden, Ottmann, Lotiron, Utrillo, Hartley, Peckstein, Valensi, Jawlensky, Knauerhase, Münter, Tobeen, Bloch, Dove, de

Chirico, Walkowitz, Boussingault, Kanoldt and Granzow.

One of the healthiest movements of the day, though without novelty, is Vorticism whose headquarters are London. The Vorticists are unrestricted as to theories, and have for their aim the final purification of painting as well as of the other arts. Their creed is an intelligent one, and is in direct line with the current tendencies. As yet they have produced no pictures which might be called reflective of their principles, but they have kept before English artists the necessity of eliminating the unessentials. Their main doctrines, so far as painting is concerned, were set forth by the Synchromists long before the Vorticists came into public being; but by their insistence on the basic needs of purification, they have done valuable service. The Synchromists in their manifesto wrote: "An art whose ambition it is to be pure should express itself only in the means inherent in that art. . . . Painting being the art of colour, any quality of a picture not expressed by colour is not painting." A year later in *Blast*, the Vorticists' publication, we read: "The Vorticist relies on this alone; on the primary pigment of his art, and nothing else. . . . Every concept, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form. It belongs to the art of this form. If sound, to music, if formed words, to literature; colour in position, to painting. . . ."

All these painters are the leaders of the secondary inspirations in modern art, and out of them grow other painters in Europe and America. They do not as a rule go by the name of any

school, but they can be classed together because in them all is the same desire to create the novel, to present a strikingly different aspect from the academies, and to differentiate themselves individually from their fellows. They all feel their incompetency to create new forms, the necessity to follow, the timidity which only permits them to modify the surfaces of other greater men. They are the creative exponents and the decadents of vital movements, and they in turn have their own imitators and decadents. They have felt the need for change, but lack the genius for new organisations. That many of them are sound artists it would be folly to deny. But they are in no sense of the word innovators. Some of them in fact are failures, but theirs is the consolation of having failed in attempting something vital and representative of the age in which they live.

XV

CONCLUSION

IN conclusion there are several points which require accentuation if the significance of modern painting is to be fully grasped. There have been three epochs in the visual arts. The first was the longest, and extended through more than two centuries. The last two epochs have required less than a hundred years for their fulfilment. Each epoch dealt with a specific phase of painting and developed that phase until its possibilities were exhausted. The ultimate aim of all great painting was purification, but before that could come about many theories had to be tested; many consummations had to take place; many problems had to be solved. The laws of formal organisation were first discovered and applied with the limited means at hand. Then came experimentation and research in the mechanics of expression — the search for new and vital methods wherewith these principles of composition might be bodied forth more intensely. Later the functioning properties of colour were unearthed and employed. In the course of this evolution many irrelevant factors found their way into painting. The men of the first epoch used primitive and obvious materials to express their forms. When the new means — means inherent in painting — were ascertained,

it was necessary to eliminate the former media. The subject-matter of painting — that is, the recognisable object, the human obstacle — had to be forced out to permit of the introduction of colour which had become an inseparable adjunct of form. To effect the coalition of pure composition and the newer methods was a difficult feat, for so long had the world been accustomed to the pictorial aspect of painting, that it had come to look upon subject-matter as a cardinal requisite to plastic creation.

The first epoch began with the advent of oil painting about 1400, and went forward, building and developing, until it reached realisation early in the seventeenth century. Knowing that organised form is the basis of all æsthetic emotion, the old masters strove to find the psychological principles for co-ordinating volume. Their means were naturally superficial, for their initial concern was to determine what they should do, not how they should do it. In expressing the form they deemed necessary to great art they used the material already at their disposal, namely: objective nature. They organised and made rhythmic the objects about them, more especially the human body which permitted of many variations and groupings and which was in itself a complete ensemble. And furthermore they had discovered that movement — an indispensable attribute of the most highly emotional composition — was best expressed by the poise of the human figure. Colour to these early men was only an addendum to drawing. They conceived form in black and white, and sought to reinforce their work by the realistic use of pigments. That colour was an

infixed element of organisation they never suspected. Their preoccupation was along different lines. The greatest exponents of intense composition during this first epoch were Tintoretto, Giorgione, Masaccio, Giotto, Veronese, El Greco and Rubens. These men were primarily interested in discovering absolute laws for formal rhythm. The mimetic quality of their work was a secondary consideration. In Rubens were consummated the aims of the older painters; that is, he attained to the highest degree of compositional plasticity which was possible with the fixed means of his period. In him the first cycle terminated. There was no longer any advance to be made in the art of painting until a new method of expression should be unearthed. However, the principles of form laid down by these old masters were fundamental and unalterable. Upon them all great painting must ever be based. They are intimately connected with the very organisms of human existence, and can never be changed until the nature of mankind shall change.

After Rubens a short period of decadence and deterioration set in. The older methods no longer afforded inspiration. About the beginning of the nineteenth century the second cycle of painting was ushered in by Turner, Constable and Delacroix. These men, realising that until new means were discovered art could be only a variation of what had come before, turned their attention to finding a procedure by which the ambition of the artist could be more profoundly realised. This second cycle was one of research and analysis, of scientific experimentation and data gathering. To surpass Rubens in his own

medium was impossible: he had reached the ultimate outpost of æsthetic possibilities with what materials he possessed. The new men first made inquiry into colour from the standpoint of its dramatic potentialities. Naturalism was born. While Delacroix was busy applying the rudiments of colour science to thematic romanticism, Courbet was busy tearing down the tenets of conventionalism in subject-matter, and Daumier was experimenting in the simultaneity of form and drawing. Manet liberated the painter from set themes, and thereby broadened the material field of composition. The Impressionists followed, and by labourious investigations into nature's methods, probed the secrets of colour in relation to light. The Neo-Impressionists went further afield with scientific observations; and finally Renoir, assimilating all the new discoveries, rejected the fallacies and co-ordinated the valuable conclusions. In him was brought to a close the naturalistic conception of painting. He was the consummation of the second cycle. During this period the older laws of composition were for the most part forgotten. The painters were too absorbed in their search for new means. They forgot the foundations of art in their enthusiasm for a fuller and less restricted expression. The essential character of colour and light and the new freedom in subject selection so intoxicated them that they lost sight of all that had preceded them. But their gifts to painting cannot be overestimated. By finding new weapons with which future artists might achieve the highest formal intensity, they opened up illimitable fields of æsthetic endeavour: they made possible the third and last

cycle which resulted in the final purification of painting.

Of this cycle Cézanne was the primitive. Profiting by the Impressionist teachings, he turned his attention once more to the needs of composition. He realised the limitations of the naturalistic conception, and created light which, though it was as logical as nature's, was not restricted to the realistic vision. Colour with him became for the first time a functional element capable of producing form. The absolute freedom of subject selection — a heritage from the second cycle — permitted him extreme distortions, and with these distortions was opened up the road to abstraction. Matisse made form even more arbitrary, and Picasso approached still nearer to the final elimination of natural objectivity, though both men ignored colour as a generator of form. They carried forward the work of Cézanne only on its material side. Then Synchromism, combining the progress of both Cézanne and the Cubists, took the final step in the elimination of the illustrative object, and at the same time put aside the local hues on which the art of Cézanne was dependent. Since the art of painting is the art of colour, the Synchromists depended entirely on primary pigment for the complete expression of formal composition. Thus was brought about the final purification of painting. Form was entirely divorced from any realistic consideration: and colour became an organic function. The methods of painting, being rationalised, reached their highest degree of purity and creative capability.

The evolution of painting from tinted illustration to an abstract art expressed wholly by the

one element inherent in it — colour, was a natural and inevitable progress. Music passed through the same development from the imitation of natural sounds to harmonic abstraction. We no longer consider such compositions as The Battle of Prague or Monastery Bells æsthetically comparable to Korngold's Symphonietta or Schönberg's *Opus 11*. And yet in painting the great majority confines its judgment to that phase of a picture which is irrelevant to its æsthetic importance. So long has form and composition expressed itself through recognisable phenomena that the cognitive object has come to be looked upon as an end, whereas it is only a means to a subjective emotion. The world still demands that a painting shall represent a natural form, that is, that the basis of painting shall be illustration. The illustrative object was employed by the older painters only because their means were limited, because they had no profounder method wherewith to express themselves. And even with them the human body was deliberately disproportioned and altered to meet the needs of composition. When the properties of colour began to be understood, the older methods were no longer required. Colour itself became form. But so deeply rooted was the illustrative precedent that no one painter had the courage to eliminate objectivity at one stroke. Cézanne took the first great step; Matisse, the second; Cubism the next; and Synchromism the final one.

So long as painting deals with objective nature it is an impure art, for recognisability precludes the highest æsthetic emotion. All painting, ancient and modern, moves us æsthetically only in

so far as it possesses a force over and beyond its mimetic aspect. The average spectator is unable to differentiate his literary and associative emotions from his æsthetic ecstasy. Form and rhythm alone are the bases of æsthetic enjoyment: all else in a picture is superfluity. Therefore a picture in order to represent its intensest emotive power must be an abstract presentation expressed entirely in the medium of painting: and that medium is colour. There are no longer any experiments to be made in methods. Form and colour — the two permanent and inalienable qualities of painting — have become synonymous. Ancient painting sounded the depths of composition. Modern painting has sounded the depths of colour. Research is at an end. It now remains only for artists to create. The means have been perfected: the laws of organisation have been laid down. No more innovatory "movements" are possible. Any school of the future must necessarily be compositional. It can be only a variation or a modification of the past. The methods of painting may be complicated. New forms may be found. But it is no longer possible to add anything to the means at hand. The era of pure creation begins with the present day.

Those who go to painting for anecdote, drama, archæology, illustration or any other quality which is not strictly æsthetic, would do well to confine their attention and their comments to the academicians of whom there is and always has been an abundant supply. Let them keep their hands off those artists who strive for higher and more eternal manifestations. The greatest artists of every age have never sought to appeal to the

lovers of reality and sentiment. Nor have they wished to be judged by standards which considered only verisimilitude and technical proficiency. It is the misfortune of painting that literary impurities should have accompanied its development, and it is the irony of serious endeavour that on account of these impurities there has been an indefinite deferment of any genuine appreciation of painting. It is difficult to convince a man who has not experienced the great æsthetic emotions which art is capable of producing, that there is an intoxication to be derived from the contemplation of art keener than that of association, sentiment or drama. Not knowing that greater delights await him once he has penetrated beneath the surface, he has doggedly combated every effort to eliminate the irrelevant accretions. But if painting was to reach its highest point of artistic creation, its realistic aspect had to go. When colour became profoundly understood, no longer could the artist apply it according to the dictates of nature. It lost its properties as decoration and as an enhancement of the naturalistic vision. Its demands freed the artist from the tyranny of nature. In becoming pure, painting drew further and further away from mimicry; and the superficial lover of painting, enslaved by the ignorant and rigid standards of the past, protested with greater and greater vehemence.

The misunderstanding which has attached to modern painting has been colossal. The newer men, because they have dared search for means of expression superior to those of the past, have met with ridicule and abuse. From Delacroix

to Synchromism the critics and public have fought every advance. Immured in tradition, their minds have been unable to grasp the meaning of the new activities or to sense the artist's need for pure creation. No school has escaped the obloquy of the professional critic who, judging art from its superficial and unimportant side, has failed to penetrate to its fundamentals. Delacroix was declared crazy by the leading critics. The *Journal des Artistes* said of him, "We do not say this man is a charlatan, but we do say this man is the equivalent of a charlatan." The *Observateur des Beaux-Arts*, commenting on this artist's failure to procure an award, remarked, "Delacroix, the leader of the new school, received no honours, but in order to recompense him, he was accorded a two hours' *séance* each day in the morgue." Gros, Delécluze and Alfred Nettement are conspicuous among the academicians and critics who bitterly opposed Delacroix's innovations. Courbet met with a similar reception. Gautier, after studying one of his pictures, wrote, "One does not know whether to weep or laugh. There are heads which recall the ensigns of tobacconists and of the menagerie." Clément de Ris said of Courbet's work, "It is the glorification of vulgar ugliness;" and de Chennevières called one of his finest pictures "an ignoble and impious caricature." Even Manet, whose radicalism was slight, brought down upon himself the abuse of the critics for daring to paint modern themes. Claretie drew the following conclusion from the Olympia: "One cannot reproach Manet for idealising *vierges folles*, for he makes of them *vierges sales*." The remark was characteristic.

Manet revolted against classic subjects, and for his modernity was excoriated by the moral traditionalists.

The early Impressionists, as pretty as they were, did not escape critical abuse. Benjamin Constant called them "the school of snobs, the conscious or unconscious enemies of art," and added, "Their days are numbered." Albert Wolff was more venomous. "These *soi-disant* artists," he wrote, "call themselves the intransigents. They take canvases, colours and brushes, fling at hazard several tones, and then sign the work. It is thus that the wandering spirits at Ville-Évrard pick up pebbles on the highway and think they have found diamonds. Hideous spectacle of human vanity straying toward dementia!" Paul Mantz's remarks were similar. His criticism in part read: "Before the works of certain members of the group one is tempted to ascribe to them a defect of the eyes, singularities of vision which would be the joy of ophthalmologists, and the terror of families." (How like the recent criticisms of the very modern men does all this sound — these accusations of insanity, these hints of defective vision! Such comments would seem to have been lifted almost bodily by the detractors of Cubism, Futurism and Synchromism.) Renoir shared a similar fate. One leading critic said it was futile to "try to explain to Renoir that the female torso is not a mass of decomposing flesh with spots of green and violet which denote the state of complete putrefaction in a cadaver." Roger Ballu explained the appearance of Renoir's work thus: "At first view it seemed that his canvases, during

their trip from the studio to the exhibition, had undergone an accident." With the exception of Manet two years prior to his death and Renoir at the age of sixty-eight, not one of the Impressionists was decorated by the French government. They were banished from official *Salons*, and compelled to expose in private galleries.

To quote from the critics who denounced Cézanne would be an endless task. When he exposed at the Impressionist exhibition in the Rue Peletier in 1877 he was universally regarded with disgust and horror and considered a barbarian. The venom of the critics was appalling. They attacked him from every standpoint, though on one point they seemed in agreement, namely: that he was a *communard*. Nor did the abuse cease with his early works. His greatness has consistently evaded critics and painters alike. Recently the American painter, William M. Chase, offered the suggestion that Cézanne did not know how to paint. Chase's opinion is not an isolated one: it is typical of the minor academic painters and the critics who view art through the eyes of the past. Henri-Matisse is another painter who has received short shrift from the reviewers. One need not have a long memory to recall the adverse criticisms he provoked. His distortions have served as a basis for a display of ignorance which has few parallels in art history. Matisse himself has fed fuel to the fire. In his interview with newspaper men he indulged in much high jesting, and the remarks attributed to him were in many instances *blague*. Others, judging him by his words, have pinned on him the labels of charlatan and degenerate.

The Cubists, misunderstood from the first, have been a source of ridicule rather than of contumely. Systematisers have sought to trace them to Dürer, forgetting that Cézanne once wrote: "Treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere and the cone; the whole put in perspective, so that each side of an object and of a plane directs itself toward a central point." Even today, after the vital contributions of the Cubists have altered the whole trend of modern art, there are few who see in them aught but the material for laughter. The critics who have accepted the Impressionists and Cézanne deny the merits of Cubism, venting their derision in a manner which recalls the detractors of the very schools which these critics now uphold. Synchromism has perhaps called forth the bitterest protests. It was the last step in the evolution of modern means. It had no affinities with the academies. There was no foothold in this new school for the conservatives and reactionaries. The Munich critics were first to attack it. Later in Paris André Salmon wrote, "The public will believe that Synchromism is the final movement of which it has learned. Synchromism is the worst of backward movements, a vulgar art, without nobility, unlikely to live, as it carries the principles of death in itself." *Les Arts et Les Artistes* summed up Synchromists with: "The house painter at the corner can, when he wishes, claim that he belongs to this school." *La Plume* discovered the fact that "Macdonald-Wright copies with a dirty broom the Slave of Michelangelo." Charles H. Caffin declared, "The whole tenor of their foreword and introduction is one of egregious self-exploitation

and self-advertisement. This . . . raises the very obvious question: 'Are these men megalomaniacs or charlatans?' Possibly they are neither the one nor the other. I am not in a position to decide."

These quotations and comments are set down to reveal the opposition which the genuine modern painters have had to contend with. The criticisms of each movement repeat themselves with the following one, even to a point of verbal similarity. The attacks on Synchromism are strangely like those which companioned Impressionism. The same facetiousness, the same irrelevant denunciation, the same opposition to the new, the same antipathy for progress are manifest in all the critics of the new painting from Delacroix to date. All arise out of ignorance, out of that immobility of mind which cannot judge clearly until a thing is swathed in the perspective of the years. Art has grown faster than the critic's ability to comprehend. Its problems are a closed book to him, for, not being a painter himself, he requires a longer period in which to assimilate the new ideals. Gradually as the new methods establish themselves, and become accepted (as in the case of Impressionism), the critic at last comes abreast of a movement; but by that time art has gone forward and left him in the rear. Again he attacks the new. All innovations are as poison to his system, until he again becomes adjusted. Thus can we account for the animosity and ridicule with which each modern movement has been met.

Nor are the animadversions of academic critics the only obstacles in the path of æsthetic develop-

ment. Those who sympathise with the new without understanding it do more harm than good. There are those who always accept the latest men irrespective of their individual merit. But modernity in itself is not a merit, and the modern enthusiasts, in defending the newest painters, very often expend their energies on the undeserving. Thus the mediocrities are given prominence over the truly great; and the lesser artists are looked upon as representative of the epoch. Again, those who admire without comprehending are given to emphasising the less important points of departure in the new men, and of ignoring the deeper qualities which represent the primary importance of modern art. The true meaning of the late movements is thereby obscured. Of this class of critic Arthur Jerome Eddy may be mentioned as representative. By crediting the distinctly second-rate moderns with qualities they have only absorbed from greater men, and by misunderstanding the animating ideals of today's painting, he presents so disproportionate and biased a history that the entire significance of modern art is lost. England, France and Germany possess critics who feel the grandeur but miss the meaning of the new ideals, and their books and articles, while crediting the modern painters with vitality, go little beneath the surface.

However, there are a few men to whom the modernist owes much for intelligent assistance. One may name Meier-Graefe as one of these, despite his being in reality a pioneer. He has shown an eager attitude to do justice, and has succeeded in bringing the modern men to the

attention of the world. Guillaume Apollinaire, editor of *Les Soirées de Paris*, has done more intelligent service for the younger heretics in France than any other man. Clive Bell and Roger Fry represent the ablest and most discerning defenders of the modern spirit in England; although Mr. A. R. Orage, by opening up the columns of the *New Age*, has permitted a healthy discussion and exposition of the radical art theories. In America much credit is due Mr. Alfred Stieglitz for his insistent demands that the later men be given a respectful hearing. By his sympathetic attitude and his ceaseless labours he has brought before the American public the work of many prominent modern artists; and his sincerity and understanding have done much toward ameliorating the conventional scoffs of American critics.

But were there no far-seeing defenders of modern painting, the signs of the awakening are too numerous and too conspicuous to be ignored. On every hand we are conscious of the struggle for new methods and forms. Not all the inertia of the critics and the public has succeeded in suppressing the vital spirit. Nor will it succeed. The modern tendency in painting cannot be dismissed as charlatanism or extremism. The ignorant and reactionary may laugh and hurl philippics. Such opposition, if it has any effect, will only prove a stimulus to those who have experienced the ecstasy of the new work. The old dies hard. Even when the corpse is buried (as it has been) the ghost lingers. But the light will soon grow too strong. The ghost in time will be dissolved. For centuries painting has been

reared on a false foundation, and the criteria of æsthetic appreciation have been irrelevant. Painting has been a bastard art — an agglomeration of literature, religion, photography and decoration. The efforts of painters for the last century have been devoted to the elimination of all extraneous considerations, to making painting as pure an art as music. But so widespread is the general ignorance regarding art's fundamentals that the modern men have been opposed at every step. Public and critical illiteracy in the arts, however, matters little. The painter's joy lies in the rapture of creation, in the knowledge that he is carrying forward the banner of a high ideal.

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